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brings hope
as losing streak
continues



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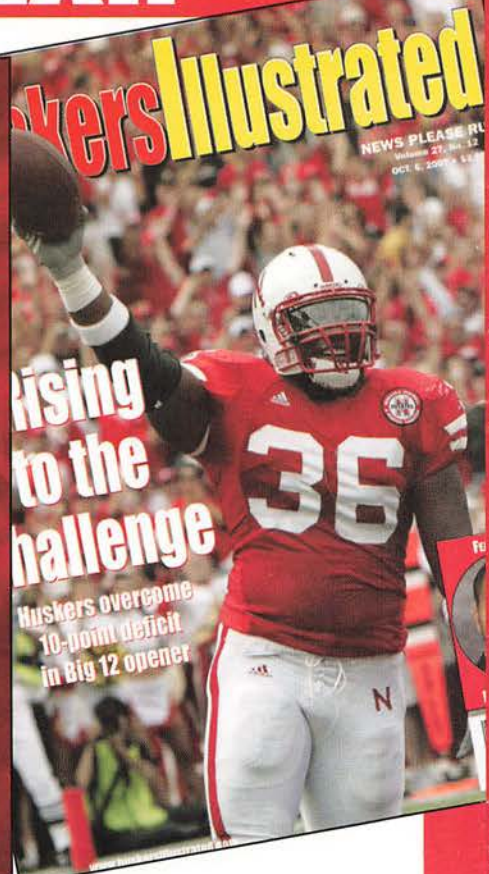
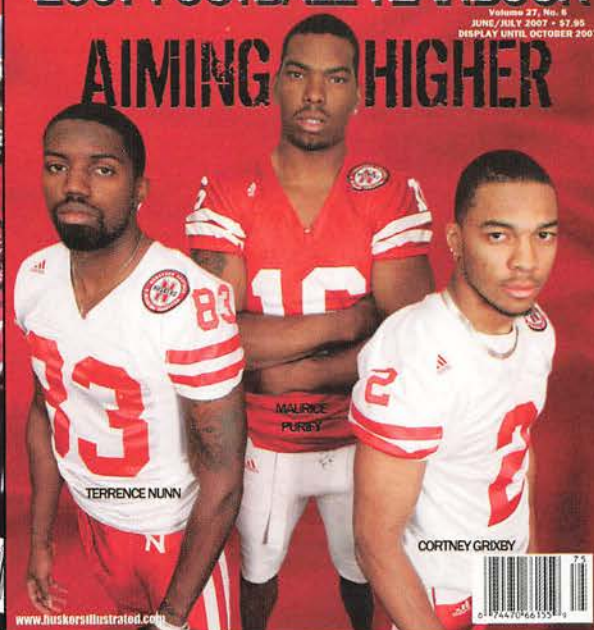


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No Magic Wand

Osborne's return brings hope during disappointing season



Brian Hill

TOM OSBORNE was being totally honest. "I don't want people to think that because I'm going to serve in this capacity for a certain period of time that everything is fixed, because it really isn't going to be quite that easy," the legendary coach said at a news conference after he was named interim athletic director.

Husker Nation was filled with happiness and hope following the announcement that Osborne would replace Steve Pederson, who had been let go one day earlier. Chancellor Harvey Perlman cited "a number of concerns from people in the athletic department about Steve's management style, about his connection with the staff, with donors, with fans, with former athletes."

Those announcements came as rumors continued to swirl about the football coaching staff. Included in Osborne's authority and responsibility is evaluating coach Bill Callahan and staff, but that won't be done "in any serious manner until the end of the season," Osborne said.

Oh, yes, there was also a football game to be played, coincidentally with former AD Bill Byrne and Texas A&M coming to town. Byrne's departure for College Station in 2002 led to Pederson's hiring.

The week of change included a revamped Tunnel Walk and offensive coordinator Shawn Watson moving from the press box to the sidelines to share play-calling with Callahan.

"We wanted to bring Coach Watson

down so he could spend time with the offense and really get them together from the aspect of motivating them, keeping them together, enhancing the communication while I was down with the defense," Callahan said.

Whatever the reason, things seemed to click along pretty well after the opening drive stalled. NU went ahead 7-6 midway through the first quarter — its first lead in three games — and trailed just 16-14 at halftime, just running out of time on a last-second attempt to get in position for a go-ahead field goal.

The break may have come at a bad time, as the Huskers lost momentum, and the Aggies took over and rolled to a 36-14 victory.

You can read more about the game and Osborne's return to the athletic department in this edition of *Huskers Illustrated*. This issue also includes updates on basketball, swimming and, of course, the top-ranked Nebraska volleyball team.

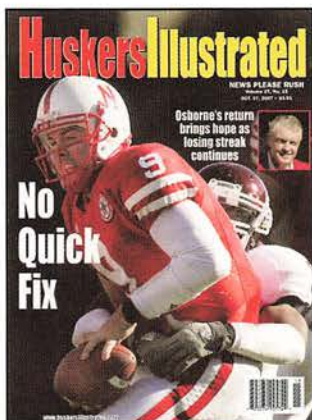
Senior Sarah Pavan, who could become NU's first four-time first-team All-American, is the focus of our volleyball feature.

As this issue was going to press, Pavan passed Allison Weston to become Nebraska's all-time leader in kills. She set the record during a 30-16, 30-25, 30-26 sweep of Kansas before the 100th consecutive sellout crowd at the NU Coliseum.

The football sellout streak, an NCAA-record 288, is not in danger this season, despite the recent misfortunes. The Huskers, now 3-3 at home and 4-4 overall, have just one home game remaining — Nov. 10 vs. Kansas State.

The current three-game losing streak might not end soon, with back-to-back road games at 6-2 Texas and 7-0 Kansas facing the beleaguered Huskers.

All things considered, there did seem to be a positive buzz around Memorial Stadium. That's certainly an improvement over the previous week. ■



ON THE COVER

Nebraska quarterback Sam Keller is sacked during a 36-14 loss to Texas A&M, the first game after Tom Osborne took over as interim athletic director. Cover photo by Scott Bruhn.

Huskers Illustrated

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By Mike Babcock

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New Challenge

Ex-Husker All-American Peter still getting used to being on the other side of a microphone



Terry DOUGLASS

INTERVIEWED NUMEROUS TIMES during his college football career at Nebraska and in the NFL with the Carolina Panthers, Jason Peter admits he's still getting used to being on the other side of a microphone.

Now 33 years old, the former standout defensive tackle who was a part of three national championship teams with the Cornhuskers from 1994-97, is tackling a new career in sports-talk radio. Peter, along with broadcasting partners Chris Schmidt and Jeff Wilkerson, are the regular personalities for "The Spread," a program that can be heard weekdays from 3-6 p.m. on KLMS (1480 AM), an ESPN radio outlet in Lincoln.

So far, Peter said he loves the challenge of his new career.

"I'm really having a fun time," Peter said. "They asked me to come out here, and they asked me to be honest, and that's what I do. I'm not against the team by any means, but I just give my game-by-game analysis."

"I'm not one of those guys who's scared to speak my mind. I guess that's why some people appreciated me back when I was playing because I spoke my mind and was always honest, and that's the way I'm going to be now."

When he first interviewed for the job, Peter was extremely nervous. He recalls going back to his hotel room after his first day and telling his wife that he didn't think things were going to pan out.

"I didn't know what I could say, what I should say and stuff like that, but it really got easier for me when I would just be myself," Peter said. "It gets easier for me every day, but it's still a challenge for me at this point. The words don't always come easily."

Still, Peter is adept at getting his point across. His three championship rings give him all the credibility he could ever need with most Husker fans, and when it comes to analysis, "Double Nickel" doesn't pull any punches.

But even with his brutally honest approach, Peter draws the line at calling out individual players at the college level. Part of that philosophy was developed from being on the other side of the equation in the NFL, when Peter said he resented some of the criticism he took from media in Carolina — even if he felt some of it was deserved.

"That's probably part of the reason why I don't take individual shots at kids," Peter said. "I won't say some guy is garbage or he's just bad — I don't do that. I'll talk about an entire defense's effort or the offensive line's effort, but I won't ever come out and say so-and-so can't do this. I remember how it feels."

By starting out on the air this fall, Peter admits that

things are probably much easier for him than they're going to be in the future. Analyzing football is almost second nature for the New Jersey native, but what happens when they put away the pads and the show must go on?

"That's when I'll really be put to the test because my knowledge of baseball and basketball certainly is not as deep as it is for football," Peter said. "But I love it. I love going to work every day. I mean, geez, I'm getting paid to talk about sports. It's a pretty good gig."

Following his senior season at Nebraska in 1997, Peter was a first-round draft choice (No. 14 overall) by the Panthers. He received a \$7.4-million signing bonus, but chronic injuries cut his career short, and football came to an end for Peter in 2001 after doctors wouldn't clear him to play due to a spinal injury.

That development temporarily severed Peter's relationship with the sport he loved.

"I was bitter for a long time, I think, at the way my career ended and the way it went in the NFL with just the injuries and the doctor who eventually said I couldn't play football anymore," Peter said. "I wanted to separate myself from football. I was just mad at it."

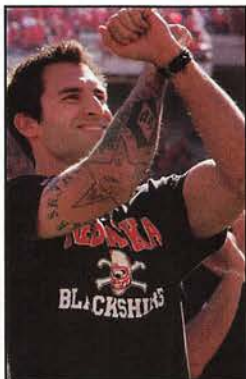
"I pictured myself playing 10 or 12 years, going into the NFL Hall of Fame and that whole story, but it just didn't go like that. For a year or two, I didn't watch any kind of football — college or NFL. I just couldn't — didn't want to."

Eventually, Peter got involved with the game again, but not before battling a highly publicized addition to drugs and pain-killers. After getting clean and needing structure in his life, Peter worked as a volunteer assistant football coach at Edison High School in Huntington Beach, Calif.

Peter said he found coaching extremely rewarding and was planning to do it again for another season when the opportunity to try sports-talk radio came about. Encouraged by national radio and TV personality Jim Rome and helped out by his former college coach, Tom Osborne, Peter landed his new job in Lincoln.

Now, Peter and his wife, Sarah — the two were married last June — are living in Lincoln and enjoying it immensely, he said. Peter said it means a lot to him to be back in the Cornhusker state.

"These people were obviously all there when I was on top and we were winning championships and when a lot of them knew about my drug thing when I went on 'HBO' Real Sports,' and after I went on that first time, the fan mail that came in from Nebraska was ridiculous," Peter said. "It meant a lot to me. These people, they just get it. They get life out here." ■



Jason Peter is a member of the Nebraska Football Hall of Fame.

Getting Back On Track

Longhorns understand that it's crucial to protect quarterback McCoy



Curt McKeever

AS MACK BROWN STOOD below addressing a group of writers at the Big 12 Conference pre-season media gathering this summer in San Antonio, a kid who'd played just one season for the Texas football team leaned over the balcony and fired off a question.

"How do you feel about small-town guys? Are they good guys?" he asked.

The Longhorns' coach looked up and, without missing a beat, replied, "Some of them are."

Then, after pausing ever so slightly, he smiled and added, "Ones that stay healthy."

The banter between Brown and Colt McCoy was a clear sign of how quickly the kid from Tuscola, Texas (pop. 714) had become "The Man" for the Longhorns.

Remember how Texas lost to Kansas State and Texas A&M to fall from the top of the Big 12 South Division in the final two regular-season games last season? McCoy got knocked out of the contest against the Wildcats, then played hurt against Texas A&M.

Ten months later, after the Longhorns had been beaten for a second straight season by K-State and also lost to Oklahoma, McCoy was dealing with the kind of pain that comes from losing four straight Big 12 games.

But he also recognized that there was a prime opportunity staring him in the face. And so before the Longhorns dispersed from their Cotton Bowl locker room following the 28-21 setback to the Sooners, McCoy stood up and asked his teammates for their attention.

"Your teammates get really emotional; your coaches get really emotional after two losses. That is something that we are not accustomed to around here," McCoy said. "I just feel like it was important for somebody to say, 'Hey, don't get down. We have a long season ahead of us . . . We went 4-2 in the first six games, and we have six more left. Let's make something happen. Don't give up, be committed, stay dedicated to this team.'"

"I think that really helped us come together and start a new season."

Playing like they refused to believe they were out of the South Division race, the Longhorns started their "new season" by pummeling Iowa State 56-3.

McCoy, barely playing into the third quarter, completed 23 of 30 passes for 298 yards and four touchdowns. He also added a career-best 44-yard scramble for his fifth score.

"Colt put it real simple," cornerback Brandon Foster said of McCoy's message following the Oklahoma game. "He said if we keep playing hard like we did, we'll be able to win."

"We believe Colt, he's a great team leader, and it was just great to see him step up and say that. Coaches can only say so much, but when players get up there and voice their opinion, it's great. We definitely took that to heart as a team, and we just rolled with it from there."

Last season, the 6-foot-3, 205-pound McCoy started the post-Vince Young era by becoming the first freshman quarterback to steer Texas to 10 wins. McCoy completed 217 of 318 passes for 2,570 yards and a school-record 29 touchdowns, which also tied the NCAA mark for freshmen. Not surprisingly, he was named by some publications as the National Freshman of the Year.

After a slow start to this season, McCoy regained his rhythm against Oklahoma and Iowa State. In those contests, he completed 42 of 56 passes for 622 yards with six passing touchdowns, one rushing touchdown and just one interception.

"Everybody gets on Colt, but it's obvious that when he gets time to throw, he's really good and really accurate," Brown said. "I thought (against Iowa State) and part of the game against Oklahoma are what we saw in two-a-days. He hardly missed a pass in two-a-days and we saw him every day."

"I thought he would be that way every play (during the season), but then we didn't protect him as well as we needed to. So hopefully now we are on track, and he can continue to have the time he had (against Iowa State). Boy, was he good. He just didn't miss."

Texas' plan against the Cyclones called for a rapid-fire, no-huddle attack, and McCoy got it started with a bang.

On the Longhorns' first play, he improvised after scrambling away from a blitz, and noticed Jordan Shipley had gotten behind his defender before zipping a pass for a 58-yard touchdown.

Texas' aerial game was so crisp that the Longhorns didn't attempt a running play until early in the second quarter. At the time, the entire second-team offense, composed of mostly freshmen, was on the field.

Having hit Shipley for another score that made it 28-3 at halftime, McCoy flashed his footwork in the third quarter. First, he avoided pressure long enough to fire a 20-yard TD pass to Nate Jones. On the next series, he took advantage of players who'd dropped into pass coverage and took off on his 44-yard run.

"He definitely has control of the offense, and overall on the team he is stepping up big time," defensive tackle Frank Okam said of McCoy.

That's a huge plus for Texas, given the extremely competitive scenario that exists in college football this season.

"There were times around here that we were good enough to play bad and still win, but we can't do that right now," Brown said after the Iowa State game. "This is a good time for them to realize that."

And then, his thoughts turned to his quarterback.

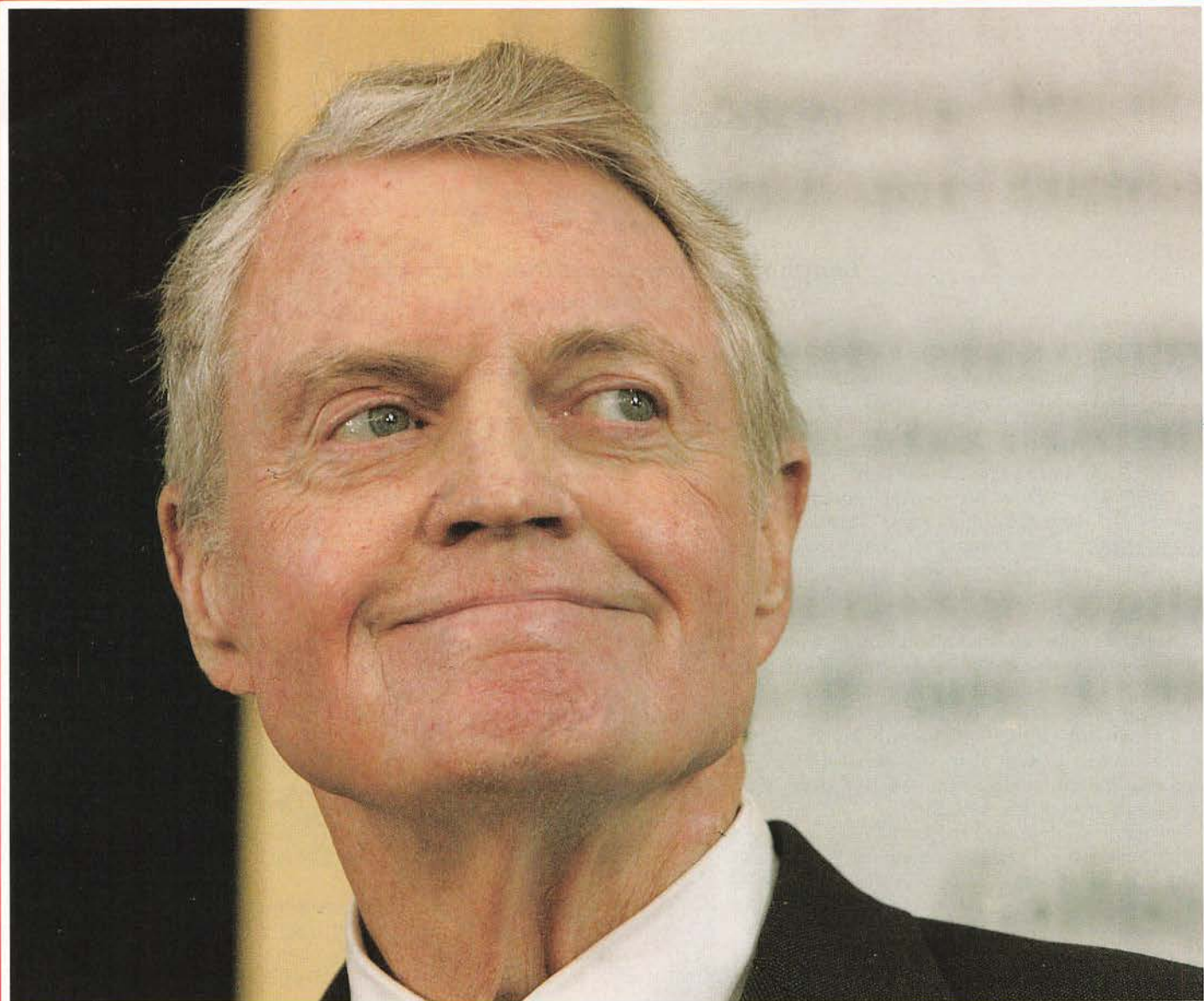
"They also saw," Brown noted, "what we can do when we protect Colt." The kid who's clearly "The Man."

"If we can build on this," McCoy said, "we'll have a great second half of the season." ■



Mack Brown's Longhorns lost four straight Big 12 games.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football, he is the primary beat writer for baseball. Curt can be reached at cmckeever@journalstar.com



“I don’t want people to think that because I’m going to serve in this capacity for a certain period of time that everything is fixed, because it really isn’t going to be quite that easy.”

— **Tom Osborne**

He's Back

Legendary coach returning as interim athletic director

STORIES BY MIKE BABCOCK • PHOTOS BY SCOTT BRUHN

W

ell, yes, Tom Osborne is back where he belongs, sort of.

But no, he is not going to be coaching football. If he were to consider returning to the sideline, "Nancy would get a gun and shoot me," he said, refer-

ring to his wife.

She will be making a sacrifice as it is, anyway.

Had his answer been no, "life would be a lot easier," he said.

Nebraska chancellor Harvey Perlman asked the question, a day after firing Steve Pederson as athletic director: Would the Hall of Fame coach serve as interim athletic director?

The answer was yes. "I care about this program," said Osborne.

So 10 years after stepping aside from coaching, in favor of hand-picked successor Frank Solich, Osborne came home. It seemed like old times at the news conference to introduce him.

The lobby of the university's Van Brunt Visitor's Center was jammed with reporters, with athletic department personnel and curious students, and even a few with no direct connection to the proceedings who had come to share in the drama. A bank of cameras captured the proceedings, preserving them in time. Late-afternoon sunlight streamed through the windows to Osborne's left, its warmth symbolic.

It seemed like old times when Osborne strode into the room, accompanied by Perlman. He acknowledged familiar faces and spoke from notes scribbled on a sheet of paper, folded once over.

Actually, he didn't refer to the notes. They were more a prop, a coach's scripted plays. Osborne was comfortable in the surroundings, and more importantly, with his new responsibility.

Three terms in congress, a run for governor and 36 years in coaching, including the first 11 as Bob Devaney's

NEBRASKA'S ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

H.D. Gish (1928-31)

Dana X. Bible (1932-36)

Lawrence McCeney "Biff" Jones (1937-42)

A.J. Lewandowski (1942-47)

George "Potsy" Clark (1948-53)

J.W. "Bill" Orwig (1954-60)

*Charles Miller & Joseph Soshnik (1961)

W.H. "Tippy" Dye (1962-66)

Bob Devaney (1967-92)

Bill Byrne (1993-2002)

Steve Pederson (2003-2007)

**Tom Osborne (2007)

*Interim co-directors

**Interim

assistant, have prepared him well for this time. "I'm not nervous at all," he said. "I've stood there on fourth-and-1 and had everybody screaming at me. So this is no problem."

The process moved quickly. It was a no-brainer for Perlman, assuming Osborne would agree. And how could he not? These are tough times. Nebraska needed him, football in particular.

The football program is in "disarray, a little bit," Perlman said.

Even so, "I will certainly serve all sports equally," said Osborne. "Sometimes there's a little bit of anxiety when a football guy or basketball person is in a position like this. 'Well, you're only going to pay attention to one sport.' That will not be an issue with me. I will pay attention to everybody.

"Naturally, football is a big situation we have right now

"He still has the full authority and responsibility of the athletic director. I'm counting on him to do what needs to be done, as he believes it needs to be done to move our program forward and make progress here."

**— Chancellor Harvey Perlman
(on Tom Osborne's "interim" title)**

because of the financial restraints."

The athletic department operates in the black because of Big Red football.

Osborne's appointment is open-ended. There is no timeline for a permanent replacement. But the term "interim" preceding his title should not be misconstrued. "He still has the full authority and responsibility of the athletic director," Perlman said. "I'm counting on him to do what needs to be done, as he believes it needs to be done to move our program forward and make progress here."

Included in his authority and responsibility is evaluating coach Bill Callahan and staff. That won't be done "in any serious manner until the end of the season," said Osborne.

He said he had no intention of taking the athletic department in a different direction, quite the opposite, in fact. His charge is to restore tradition as well as order.

And who better to restore tradition than the embodiment of it?

Osborne's coaching accomplishments are well-chronicled. His record was a remarkable 255-49-3. His teams won 13 conference championships and three national titles in his final four seasons.

Each of his teams won at least nine games and played in a bowl.

In addition, he served as assistant

athletic director, standing in near the end of Devaney's career. He was instrumental in establishing the academic programs that have set Nebraska apart.

"I'm absolutely convinced that athletics is part of the total university, and really, we're all about the mission of the university, which is education," Osborne said.

"You think about it, I always looked at coaching as teaching, and so there are more teachable moments, sometimes, on the athletic field, in that arena, than there might be in the classroom. So it will not be a case of the tail wagging the dog, for me going off in a different direction."

His actions speak louder. Osborne is teaching a leadership class in the College of Business Administration. The news conference had to wait for his class to end.

Osborne said his combined salary for teaching and serving as interim athletic director wouldn't exceed Perlman's salary as chancellor. "Harvey agreed very quickly," he said.

Those who believe Nebraska has moved away from its tradition since Solich was fired after the Colorado game in 2003 could take consolation in Osborne's words.

"This program is very important to this state," he said.

He learned from Devaney, his Hall



of Fame predecessor, "that one thing that tends to unify the 93 counties out there (in the state) is athletics, and the football program in particular. It has served to provide a sense of identity to the state, and so it's important that this thing does well," he said.

"I'm not just talking about football. I'm talking about the whole athletic program."

Clearly, healing had already begun. Enthusiasm quickly spread throughout the state.

"I think Tom's doing this because he cares about the athletic department, about the university," said Perlman. "I think he does it at great risk to himself because I don't think anyone can come in with a magic wand. I have an uneasy feeling that some people think suddenly everything's going to change."

"He knows better than that. I know better than that. Tom needs the support of Husker fans so that we can move this forward. It's not a quick fix. It's in the long-term."

How long Osborne will work at fixing it, how long his term will be, is uncertain.

"I guess my intention is to work



Chancellor Harvey Perlman introduces Tom Osborne as the interim athletic director.

things when he stepped aside from coaching 10 years ago. But he remained active from the day he left — working his way back, as it has turned out.

He didn't set out to do that. And until the day after Perlman asked for Pederson's resignation, he never envisioned himself in such a situation.

"I don't come here with a lot of answers," Osborne said.

"Sometimes, people remember back when we won a lot of football games those last few years. But I can remember a few years before that where it wasn't all that hot."

What was "not all that hot" then would have been enough to alleviate the current crisis.

"All you can do is do the best you can, work hard and bring whatever experience you have to the table. So I don't want people to think that because I'm going to serve in this capacity for a certain period of time that everything is fixed, because it really isn't going to be quite that easy," he said.

Short of his coaching again, this was the next best thing. ■

myself out of a job," he said. "When the chancellor says we've had enough of you, you've done all you can, what-

ever, walk into the sunset, catch a few fish, I'll go."

In theory, he was going to do those

A Little 'Jungle' Karma

Tom Osborne's return to Nebraska as interim athletic director provided immediate and positive national exposure for the program. Soon after he finished the news conference to announce his taking the position and shook hands with well-wishers, he was on the phone with several national radio networks. And the next day, he made a 10-minute appearance on the nationally syndicated Jim Rome radio show.

Among the questions Rome asked was whether he felt betrayed by his predecessor Steve Pederson's firing of Frank Solich, his hand-picked successor as head coach.

"I don't feel necessarily betrayed," Osborne told Rome. "I told people that I thought firing a guy that had won nine games when he was fired — and, of course, his team won 10 that year — sent a message. But that's all behind us, and I have always maintained a good respect for Steve."

Osborne talked about the importance to the state of Nebraska's football tradition, including the walk-on

program, which had enabled the Cornhuskers to compete against programs in areas with higher population density. "We did have that mentality, that character-ethic those walk-ons brought, and it permeated the whole program," he said. "I think they're trying to get back to some of that right now. And so I'm hopeful some of that tradition can be recaptured."

Rome was complimentary of Osborne and Cornhusker football.

"I'm somebody on the outside who respects that program a lot, the history of the program, the tradition of the program, that walk-on portion of the program I was always amazed by," Rome said. "If you didn't know any better, you might sit on the outside and pot-shot Nebraska if you've never been there or what they're about. But you're talking about a state with about 1.7 million people, and as he pointed out, it's a way of life. That football program is so much to so many people."

Osborne is "going to come back and lend some guidance and leadership," he said. ■

'The Best T

Chancellor says decision to terminate athletic director was made prior to Homecoming game

At issue was semantics. A reporter asked University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chancellor Harvey Perlman if he had to "coerce" Steve Pederson into leaving his post as Cornhusker athletic director.

"Well, 'coerce' is a funny word," Perlman replied.

The reporter re-phrased the question: So had Perlman "fired" Pederson?

"Yes, I asked for his resignation," Perlman said. "I guess that means he was fired."

Maybe Perlman was perturbed by the question. His demeanor didn't betray him if that were the case, but he certainly had good reason. The question came well into a news conference on the Monday after the football team's 45-14 Homecoming loss to Oklahoma State. The subject of the news conference was Perlman's decision, a couple of days earlier, to fire Pederson as athletic director.

Everyone knew what had occurred. The question needn't have been asked.

"There is no joy in my heart for having to do this," Perlman said in his opening statement.

But removing Pederson after five years, he thought, "was the best thing to do for the University of Nebraska, the state of Nebraska and the athletic program for the university."

It is reasonable to assume few in the room shared Perlman's sadness. Compassion rarely accompanies such events. And that was never more

apparent than on this gray October afternoon.

"This is personally, a very sad day for me," said Perlman.

The move had to be made, however, and it hadn't been made lightly. "I know every one of you thinks that this is because of a football game that was played last Saturday," Perlman said, referring to the Oklahoma State loss. "Let me tell you that this decision was made prior to this weekend."

He had made the decision the previous Thursday and discussed it with Nebraska president J.B. Milliken on the morning of the Oklahoma State game. Even if the Cornhuskers had won the game, "we certainly would have put the process in place, as we did today," he said.

The basis of the decision? "I have become aware since July or August of a number of concerns from people in the athletic department about Steve's management style, about his connection with the staff, with donors, with fans, with former athletes," he said. "I don't know if they're his fault. I assume there is plenty of fault to spread around, and it may very well be that the vulnerability of the football program had encouraged people to come forward, where prior to that time they had not."

That time-frame was significant. Perlman gave Pederson a contract extension in July, meaning that the firing will cost the athletic department about \$2.2 million in a buyout.

Perlman said he conducted a leadership review before approving the extension, sending e-mails to people



in the athletic department, "inviting them to . . . send confidentially to me anything that they thought would be important to me, both to evaluate Steve and to help him better lead the department.

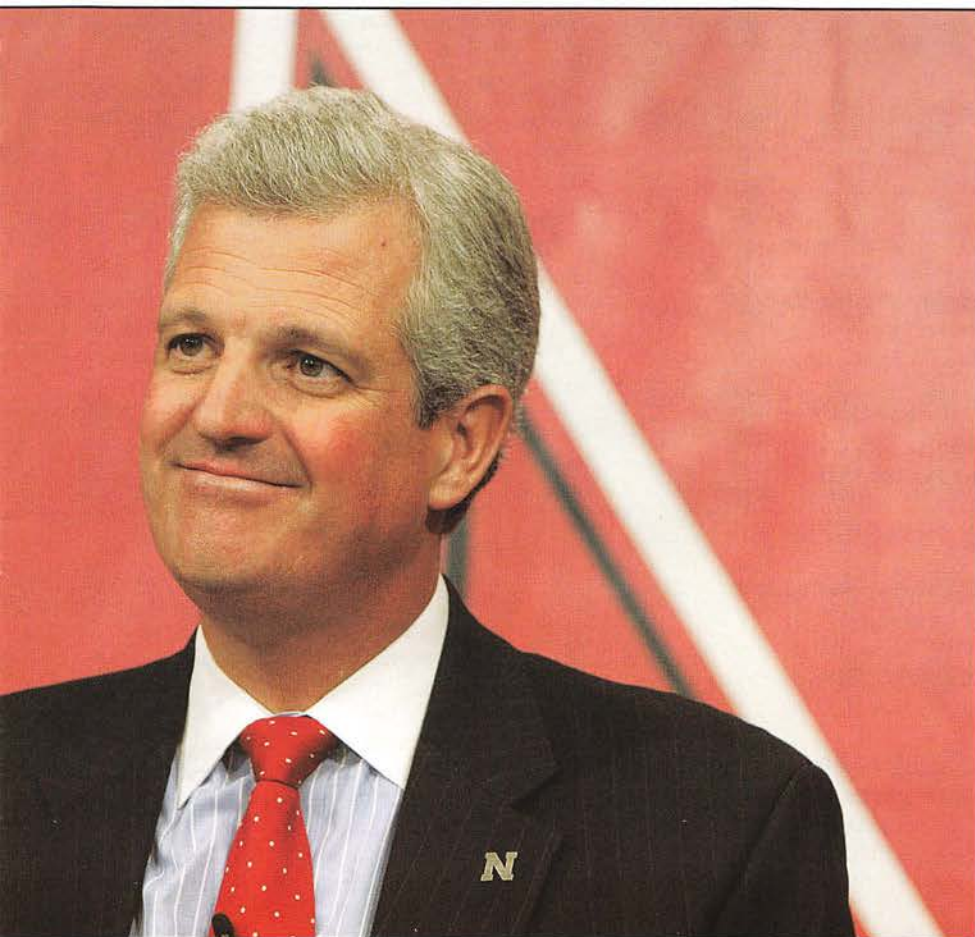
"And I received two, one that was extraordinarily positive and one that was negative."

Perlman declined to elaborate on the perceived flaws in Pederson's management style.

"All I know is that he was, I think, losing the support of people in the athletic department, many of whom were strong supporters of him initially," said Perlman.

"He was not positioned in a way that I think a person needs to be positioned to make the decisions that need to be made and the assessments that need to be made. It's not clear to me that he could not have overcome

hing to Do'



Steve Pederson was named Nebraska's athletic director on Dec. 20, 2002, replacing Bill Byrne, who left for Texas A&M.

PEDERSON'S STATEMENT

Former Nebraska Athletic Director Steve Pederson released this statement:

"The University of Nebraska has been an incredibly special place to my family and me for more than three decades. Whether it was during my time as a Nebraska student, staff member or athletic director, I have always been tremendously proud to call myself a Cornhusker.

Being Nebraska's athletic director was not merely a job for me. I viewed it as an honor and important duty to serve the Nebraska tradition of academic and athletic excellence. During the last five years we have enjoyed many successes and also faced a number of difficult challenges. In the midst of both, we always made our decisions based on what was in the very best interests of our university and it's outstanding student-athletes.

On and off the field, we worked passionately and tirelessly to not just win, but win the right way. We can take great pride in the fact that Nebraska still sets the national standard when it comes to producing Academic All-Americans. We have been able to build state-of-the-art facilities like the North Stadium project, but in a financially responsible way. And we have hired new coaches and staff members who are dedicated to success on the field, in the classroom and in the lives of our student-athletes well after their last game has been played.

I would like to thank the great friends and supporters of Nebraska who have been loyal to us the whole way through. Finally, and most importantly, I want to thank our student-athletes, coaches and staff. It has been an honor to work with you and I wish you only the very best." ■

these, if things were calm and you had time to work on it."

The vulnerability of the football program allowed no such grace period.

"When a program is in need of support, sometimes you just have to make a change to move a program forward," Perlman said. "Anybody in an administrative position, athletic director, chancellor, you have to retain a certain degree of credibility in order to make the decisions that have to be made on a day-to-day basis. And I was fearful that . . . Steve was no longer in that position.

"I wish him the best. I think he did extraordinarily good things for athletics and for the university," said Perlman. "I hope that everyone in Nebraska will applaud those good

things."

Not everyone will, of course. Most won't, in fact. That's what happens in such situations. People who are asked to resign rarely get credit for the good things they accomplished.

As often as not, they are dehumanized, reduced to a single dimension.

The athletic department budget is sound, Perlman said, and the Tom and Nancy Osborne Complex stands in testament to Pederson's tenure as athletic director.

There are other positives that no one will acknowledge now.

How did Pederson respond when asked to resign.

"He was, as you would expect, very professional," said Perlman.

The same couldn't be said of many of his detractors. ■

10 QUESTIONS

with **ANTHONY WEST**

**Redshirt Freshman Cornerback
San Diego, Calif.**

Anthony West was born and raised in San Diego. But don't tell LeDanian Tomlinson this; West is a Kansas City Chiefs fan, a huge Kansas City Chiefs fan. "I can't sit here and say I'm not a (San Diego) Chargers fan," West said. "But when those two are playing, it's the Chiefs, by far."

West doesn't lack civic pride, mind you. It's just that his dad, Robert, played for the Chiefs, after playing at San Diego State. So "I grew up a Chiefs fan," the Cornhusker cornerback said.

He also grew up playing football, though not because his dad forced him to play.

"He always gave me that choice," said West. "I respect that about him. He wanted me to play a sport, period, just be active. But it wasn't forceful, as far as saying, 'Football is what you're going to do.' He let me see what I liked best. It was football, and once I made that decision, he was real helpful."

Others expected him to play football because his dad had, however. That was especially the case in youth-league football (he began playing when he was about 8-years old). "The coaches were like, 'Look, your dad's over there watching,'" he said. "It was motivation."

If someone came to San Diego to visit you, what would you want to show them?

"It depends on where they were coming from. If they were coming from Nebraska, it would have to be the beach. That was the only weird thing coming out here. I couldn't just drive down to the beach. I mean, it wasn't like I was at the beach all the time. It was just cool that it was there."

What is something you would absolutely not eat?

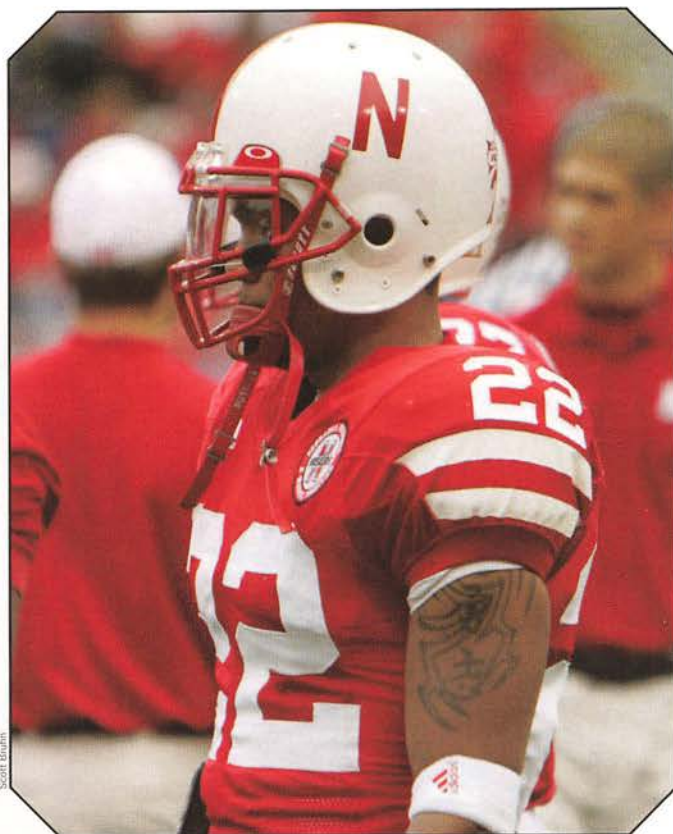
"I had never eaten sushi until a couple of months ago. I had tried it when I was younger, and I was like, 'Ah, no, I'm good.' But my mom got me to taste it, and I'm all right with it now."

What is your most embarrassing moment on a football field?

"It had to be in high school. It was the first game. We had a little kickoff celebration. They were introducing the starters, and a couple of my teammates thought it would be funny. We weren't too far apart, and when they called my name to run out, the guy behind me kind of tripped me. It was a kid I grew up with. I didn't fall all the way down. I just stumbled. It wasn't too embarrassing."

What's it like to take the Tunnel Walk?

"It's amazing. It's not a one-time thing, not something that gets old. It's something that gets you going each time. It's real cool. I remember my first time, it was crazy. I was one of the guys who used to come out at the front, but I got tripped up, so now I wait."



If your life were made into a movie, whom would you pick to play your character?

"It would have to be Will Smith because he could be goofy, and he could be serious at the same time. That's how I am. I know when to be serious and when to laugh."

What's the best thing served at the training table?

"Catfish, I grew up on catfish. I love it. It's seasoned right and everything. It's right on point."

Pro ice skater, pro clown, pro exercise guru or pro magician?

"Magician, it would have to be a magician. I always watch a lot of that stuff on TV, like 'Criss Angel the Mind Freak.' It would have to be a magician. I wouldn't be an ice skater or clown."

What three things would you have to have on your iPod?

"It would have to be all kinds of old-school music, Earth, Wind and Fire, stuff like. I like R&B, and I like to have a rapper on there, too. My favorite is Tupac, by far. He's not around anymore, but when he came out with something, it just grabbed me. Earth, Wind and Fire came from my pops. Dad used to listen to that all the time. I grew up on that."

When you play college football video games, what team do you choose?

"Either Nebraska or Cal. I tried playing with San Diego State a couple of times, just because it's in my hometown, but it doesn't work, so I've got to stick with Nebraska or Cal. I play D.J. (Jones) a lot. We go back and forth. If he gets Nebraska, I'll get Cal. Sometimes he'll get somebody else, choose random teams, if he doesn't get Nebraska. We kind of fight for it."

What's the best Halloween costume you ever had?

"Power Rangers, I think I've still got it back home. I always focused on the red one. That was who I rode with, so that's who I was. The neighborhood wasn't known for kids to be out past dark, so we'd always go to the nicer neighborhoods. I kind of stayed away from our neighborhood, just because we had all kinds of problems with gang stuff. So I got out of there." ■

FORMER CORNHUSKERS IN THE COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

(Listed in order of their induction)

Ed Weir, tackle (1923-25)
George Sauer, fullback (1931-33)
Guy Chamberlin, end (1913-15)
Clarence Swanson, end (1918-21)
Sam Francis, fullback (1934-36)
Bobby Reynolds, halfback (1950-52)
Forrest Behm, tackle (1938-40)
Wayne Meylan, middle guard
(1965-67)
Bob Brown, guard (1961-63)
Rich Glover, middle guard (1970-72)
Dave Rimington, center (1979-82)
Johnny Rodgers, wingback (1970-72)
Mike Rozier, I-back (1981-83)

FORMER CORNHUSKER COACHES IN THE COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

(Listed in order of their induction)

Fielding Yost (1898)
D.X. Bible (1929-36)
Lawrence McCeney "Biff" Jones
(1937-41)
E.N Robinson (1896-97)
Bob Devaney (1962-72)
Tom Osborne (1973-97)

IVY LEAGUERS

(Graduates of Ivy League schools who have coached football at Nebraska)

Dr. Langdon Frothingham (1890)
Harvard
T.U. Lyman (1891)
Yale
Frank Crawford (1893-94)
Yale
E.N. Robinson (1896-97)
Brown
Walter C. "Bummy" Booth (1900-05)
Princeton
Amos Forster (1906)
Dartmouth
Fred Dawson (1921-24)
Princeton



(Johnny Rodgers' career-receiving records, once seemingly unbreakable, are likely to fall in the not-too-distant future, under an assault facilitated by coach Bill Callahan's West Coast offense. This season, Huskers Illustrated takes a look at the all-time best receivers, as senior Terrence Nunn continues to climb on the all-time receptions list, topped by Rodgers.)

TOM PENNEY (1966-68) No 85 6-1, 194 Augusta, Kan.

Penney's nickname was "Nickel." The story was that assistant coach Clete Fischer couldn't remember his name, or so Fischer claimed, and settled on another coin denomination instead. In any case, Penney was money in Nebraska's passing attack, leading the Cornhuskers in receptions in 1966 and again in 1968. Penney, a prep All-American, played halfback on the freshman team in 1965, rushing for 233 yards and averaging 6.4 yards per carry. But he was moved to split end as a sophomore and stepped in as a starter after junior Dennis Richnafsky was sidelined by a fractured ankle in the fourth game of the season against Wisconsin. Richnafsky wouldn't return until the ninth game against Oklahoma State. Penney caught 24 passes for 286 yards for a team ranked as high as fourth nationally before season-ending losses at Oklahoma and against Alabama in the Sugar Bowl game. Penney caught six passes for 62 yards against the Crimson Tide. He rotated with Richnafsky and flanker Joe Orduna in 1967, catching 17 passes for 216 yards, before becoming a full-time starter as a senior and catching 25 passes for 424 yards and two touchdowns. Penney's uncle, Lee Penney, was an All-Big Six end for Nebraska coach D.X. Bible's conference champions in 1932 and 1933. ■

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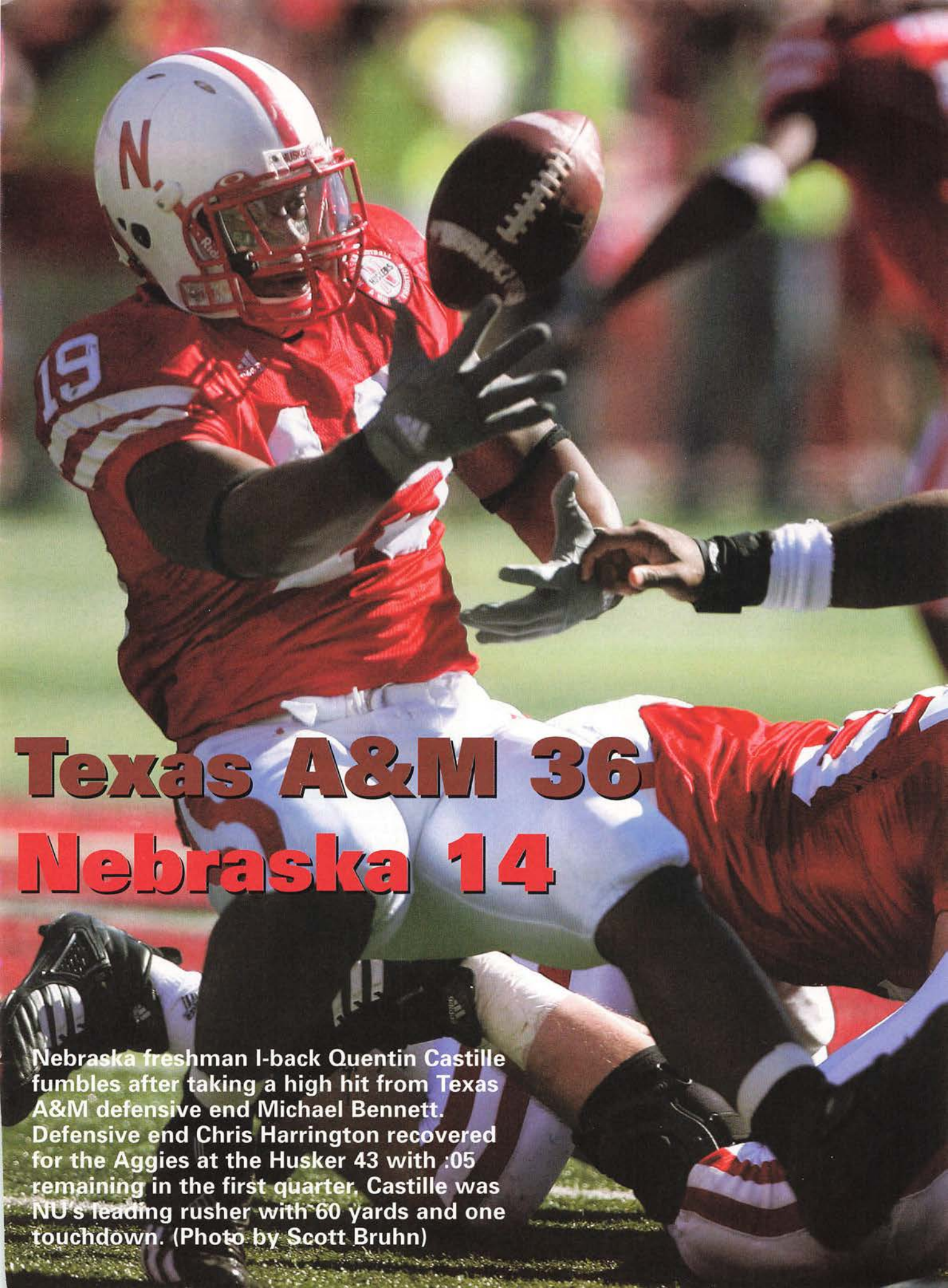
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Texas A&M 36
Nebraska 14

Nebraska freshman I-back Quentin Castille fumbles after taking a high hit from Texas A&M defensive end Michael Bennett. Defensive end Chris Harrington recovered for the Aggies at the Husker 43 with :05 remaining in the first quarter. Castille was NU's leading rusher with 60 yards and one touchdown. (Photo by Scott Bruhn)

Aggies Ruin Hus

A&M's long drives to start second half put NU in deep hole

By Mike Babcock
Photos: Scott Bruhn

Well, it was nice while it lasted. And it lasted for about a half. Nebraska held its own the first 30 minutes against Texas A&M. Despite two lost fumbles, the second of which set up an A&M touchdown, the Cornhuskers trailed only 16-14 at halftime.

They had more yards and first downs than A&M, and they were playing with an enthusiasm that had seemed to be lacking the past two weeks, in losses at Missouri and against Oklahoma State.

The plan to open the second half was simple enough, "basically to get a stop and get the ball right back to the offense," Nebraska safety Larry Asante said. "Unfortunately, it didn't happen."

What did happen was the Aggies took the kickoff — after winning the toss and deferring — and drove 80 yards in nine plays for a touchdown. Quarterback Stephen McGee carried five times on the drive, including four in a row, for 32 yards. Then big Jorvorskie Lane finished it off.

Lane, who is listed at 268 pounds, gained 31 yards to the Cornhusker 2-yard line, then crashed into the end zone for the second of his four touchdowns. "It was devastating," said Asante.

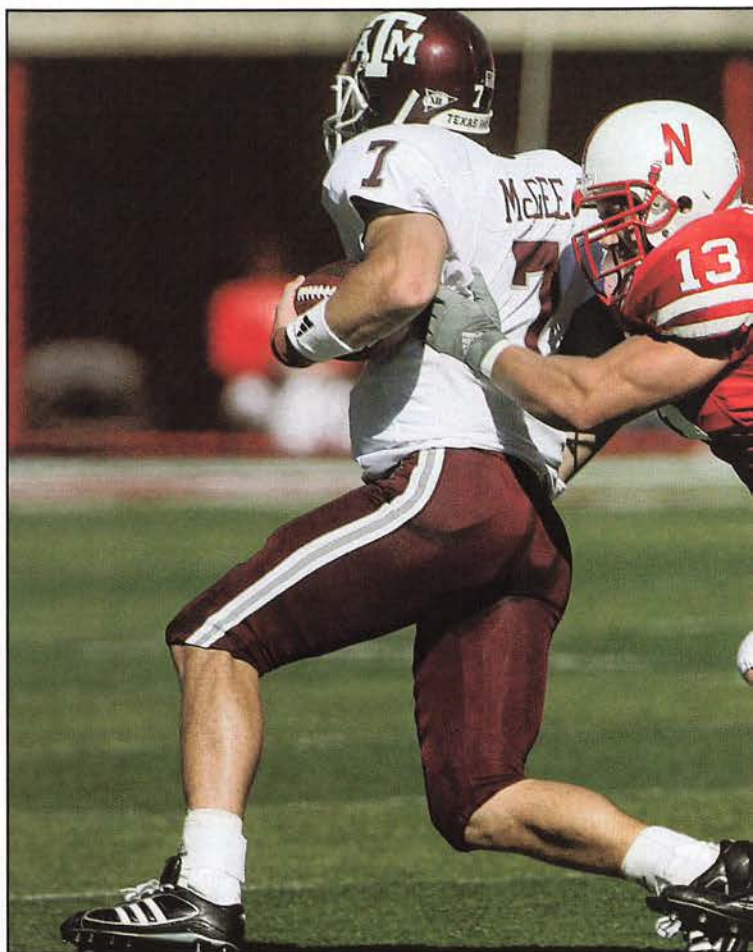
"They went up two scores. But that wasn't the end of the game."

When the Aggies drove 80 yards on 11 plays for a touchdown the next time they got the ball, however, Nebraska found itself in too deep of a hole to dig itself out.

"The opening drive, if we could have stopped them and then capitalized with a score, we could have changed the momentum of the game at that juncture," coach Bill Callahan said.

Falling behind 23-14 just under 4 minutes into the third quarter "kind of hurt our chances," said Callahan. "We got a little bit behind, and we just had to put some drives together."

After the first touchdown, Nebraska managed one first down before punting. And after the second, it drove to the



Nebraska linebacker Corey McKeon (13) chases down Texas A&M quarterback Stephen McGee (7). McGee rushed for a career-high 167 yards. McKeon was NU's leading tackler with 14.

TURNING POINT

Aggies' 6-yard line before a sack and an incomplete pass on fourth down ended the series, pointless, 10 seconds into the fourth quarter. That left the score 30-14.

With new interim athletic director Tom Osborne looking on, the Cornhuskers took their first lead since a 35-17 victory against Iowa State when freshman Quentin Castille ran 3 yards for a touchdown and Alex Henery added the extra-point kick with 6:32 remaining in the first quarter.

The score was 7-6 because Ndamukong Suh had blocked A&M's first extra-point kick.

The Aggies regained the lead, at 9-7, late in the first quarter, being forced to settle for a 39-yard field goal after having a second-and-goal at the Nebraska 6-yard line.

The lead would increase to 16-7 early in the second quarter after Nate Swift fumbled away a punt at his own 28-yard line. "I hold that one on my shoulders," Swift said. Lane carried twice, the first for 27 yards, the second into the end zone.

"They put me back there to catch the punts, and I didn't do that today," said Swift. "We stopped them a couple of

ker Plan



times with our defense there, and we had gotten the ball back. Going down and scoring would have been great, so I definitely think that was a big momentum swing."

Again the Cornhuskers responded, however, driving 79 yards on nine plays, the last a 10-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Sam Keller to wide receiver Maurice Purify.

In the first quarter, Castille lost a fumble, and though A&M couldn't capitalize, the Cornhuskers lost good field position, at their own 44-yard line. "I thought in the first half, we made some good stops on defense," Callahan said. "I thought we had the ball in favorable position when we fumbled.

"That hurts because when you do obtain good field position, whether it's (on) a punt or a run . . . and when you lose that, it just kills you. You turn the ball over and you give their offense a short field to defend for our defense and it's difficult. It's challenging, especially when you're struggling.

"It's like, 'Dang it, we just got off the field and stopped them.' And now you've got to go back out there again.' So it's like giving a team an extra possession. And that's really difficult." ■

REPORT CARD

RUSHING OFFENSE

Freshmen Quentin Castille and Roy Helu were productive on limited carries. Castille got nine carries, Helu five — and averaged nearly 8 yards per carry. The problem was, the Cornhuskers ran only 26 times. During the week, coach Bill Callahan indicated that freshman Marcus Mendoza, a redshirt candidate, might see action as well. He did not. Castille lost a fumble on his fifth carry. ★★★

PASSING OFFENSE

Quarterback Sam Keller didn't have his best day passing. "He could be better there," said Callahan. "There's no question. I think Sam will be the first one to tell you that." Even so, Keller completed 26-of-44 for 275 yards and one touchdown. He was sacked twice. Half of his completions went to I-back Marlon Lucky. With the yardage, Keller went over 2,000 this season. ★★★

RUSHING DEFENSE

Texas A&M rushed for 359 yards, with quarterback Stephen McGee and tailback Jorvorskie Lane each going well over 100. McGee ran 35 times for 167 yards. Lane carried only 15 times but gained 130 yards and scored four touchdowns. "I thought the 'read' option was tough," Callahan said. "We had a tough time containing the quarterback and really doing a good job (defensively) or making the plays on that phase of their game. They played a little bit more 'read' option than they have in the past." ★

PASSING DEFENSE

The Aggies didn't have to pass much, given their success rushing. McGee completed 13-of-22 for 100 yards and the game's first touchdown. But Nebraska sacked him twice. ★★★★★

SPECIAL TEAMS

Dan Titchener averaged 41.8 yards on four punts. Adi Kunalic put three kickoffs into the end zone, bringing his season total to 22 touchbacks on 39 kickoffs — last season's total was 12. And Andre Jones was effective returning kickoffs. But a special-teams breakdown was critical: Nate Swift's fumble of a punt, giving the Aggies the ball at the Nebraska 28-yard line. ★★

NUMBERS

Nebraska fumbled three times and lost all three in losing for a third consecutive time. In contrast, Texas A&M didn't commit a turnover. "We had our hands on a few passes today. We didn't make the plays," Cornhusker coach Bill Callahan said. "But the biggest thing is not turning the ball over. Ball security is a huge issue."

3

NEBRASKA-TEXAS A&M NOTES

COACHING SHUFFLE

Cornhusker offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Shawn Watson was on the sideline for the first time this season. In the previous seven games, he was in the press box.

"We wanted to bring Coach Watson down so he could spend time with the offense and really get them together from the aspect of motivating them, keeping them together, trying to enhance the communication, while I was down with the defense," coach Bill Callahan said.

"I tried to be much more involved on the defensive side of the ball today."

Even so, he and Watson shared the offensive play-calling, said Callahan.

A reporter asked if he was more involved in calling plays during the second half.

"I was involved throughout the entire game," he said. "There really was no difference from what transpires on a regular game day when he's (Watson) up in the box."

Having Watson on the sideline "was great," quarterback Sam Keller said. "We love Coach Watson. I love him, and he brings a spark and a little communication down there, and it was nice."

"We felt like we were rolling pretty good. We felt like we had a good plan. We just have to make more plays on offense. I have to make more plays."

Receivers coach Ted Gilmore replaced Watson in the press box and "really evaluated coverage and things of that nature as we were charting their defense," said Callahan.

WHAT ABOUT NEXT TIME?

Whether or not Watson will be on the sideline or in the press box for the next game at Texas remains to be determined, according to Callahan. "We haven't made any final decisions on that," he said. "We just wanted to see how it worked today. We'll see how it works out."

In addition to Watson, graduate assistant Jon Osterhout came down to the field from the press box to work with the defense. "We're trying to do everything we can to get these guys up and going and playing harder and better and trying to communicate with them more," Callahan said.

"I felt it was very important this game to bring everybody down and rally the troops."

COZ STILL CALLS THE DEFENSE

As for his increased involvement with the defense, he was "just helping them in terms of their communication and personnel," Callahan said. "I knew all the calls they were in this week. It was important for me to understand what was being called. I just more or less followed it and tracked it and watched the effort, watched them perform."

Even so, defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove made the calls during the game. "I just was right there to watch and evaluate and assist," said Callahan, "had to get my 2 cents worth."

SECURE THE BALL

Freshman I-back Quentin Castille lost a fumble late in the first quarter. It appeared that he might have been tackled by the face mask. "I got hit right when I got the ball, so I had a feel of the ball . . . then, I don't know what happened," Castille said. "I was like, 'My neck.'"

"I shouldn't have grabbed my neck for the ball. I need to put the ball first."

DISTRACTIONS

Callahan was asked if Tom Osborne's replacing Steve Pederson as athletic director (Osborne's title includes "interim") was a distraction for the team. "The kids came out with a lot of energy this week," said Callahan said. "I'm really proud of them and how they handled that, how they rallied and how they came together and really tried to fight. As a coach, that's all you ask your kids to do."

BRIEFLY

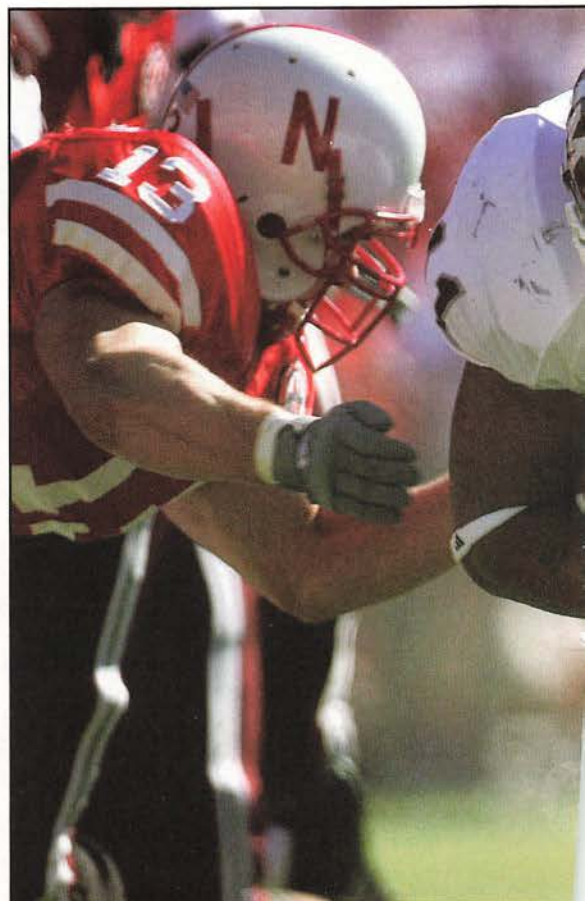
● The loss was Nebraska's third at home this season. The Cornhuskers also have lost to Southern California and Oklahoma State. The last season in which Nebraska lost three home games was 1968.

● The A&M victory snapped a four-game Nebraska winning streak in the series.

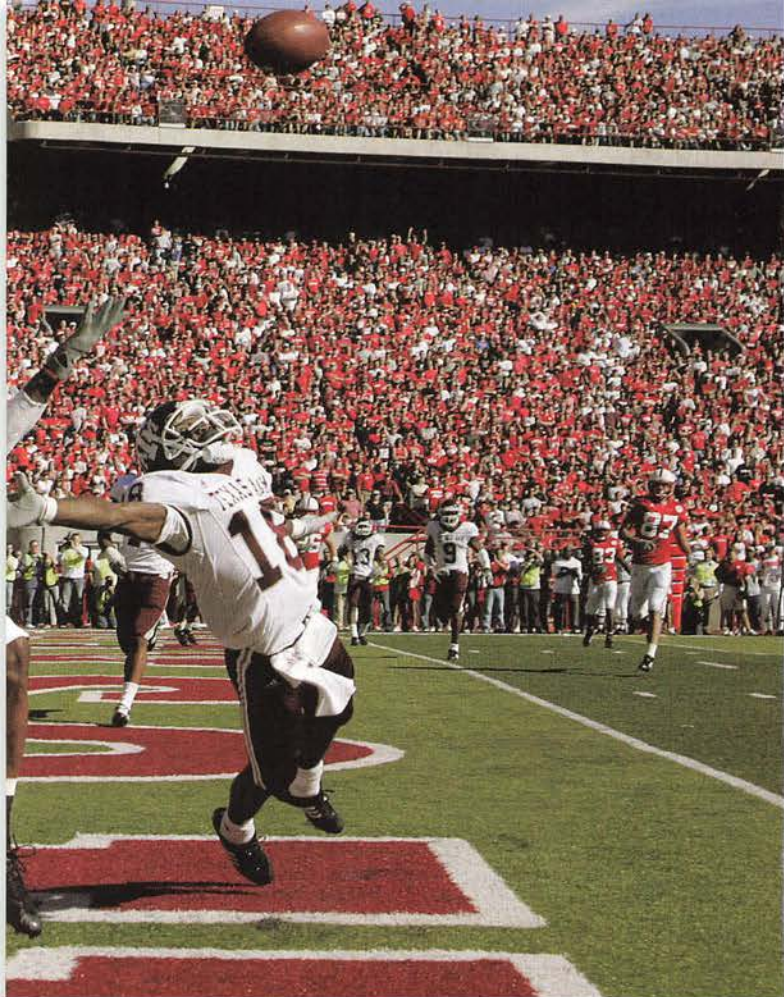
● Senior wide receiver Terrence Nunn joined Bo Ruud, Brett Byford and Zack Bowman as a game captain. Nunn caught two passes to give him 124 for his career. He is 19 from Johnny Rodgers' school record of 143. ■



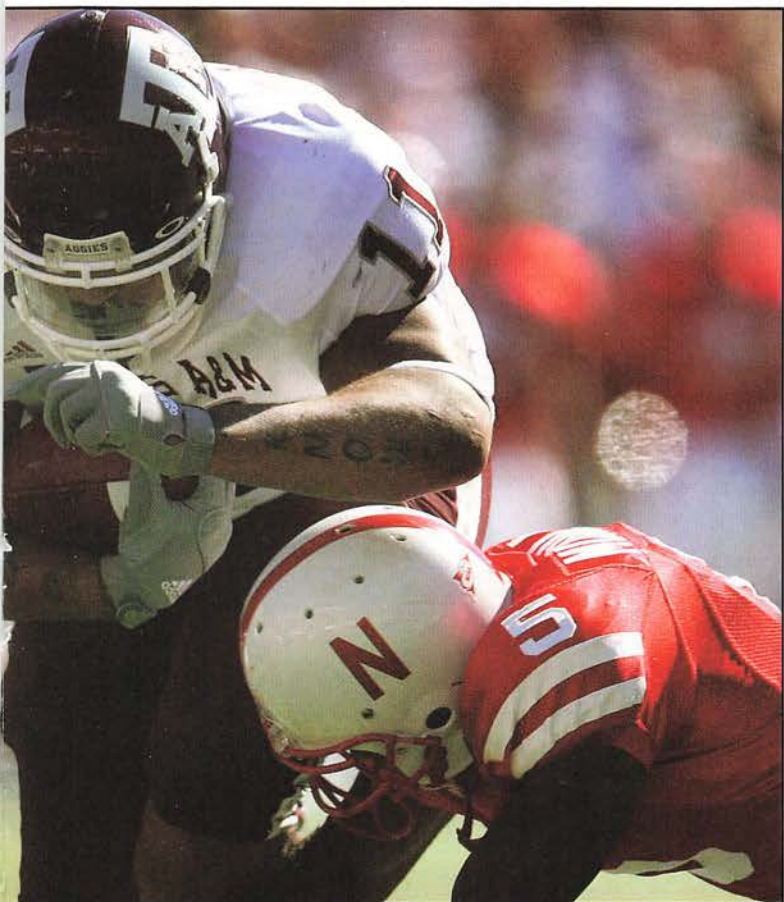
Nebraska wide receiver Maurice Purify gets set to catch a 1



NU linebacker Corey McKeon (13) and cornerback Armand



0-yard touchdown pass from Sam Keller in the second quarter.

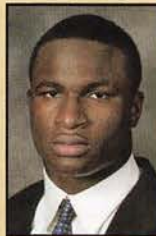


Jo Murillo (5) try to take down Texas A&M's 268-pound tailback Jorvorskie Lane.

Who STOOD OUT?

OFFENSE

I-back Marlon Lucky carried only eight times and averaged just under 3 yards per carry. But he was active as a pass receiver, with 13 catches for 125 yards. The 13 catches were a school record for a running back and increased his season's total to 49, third-best in school history. Only Johnny Rodgers caught more passes in a season, 55 in 1972 and 53 in 1971. Lucky's 83 career receptions rank fourth all-time at Nebraska, and are a school record for a running back.



Marlon Lucky

DEFENSE

The Cornhusker linebackers were kept busy trying to deal with Texas A&M's running game. Senior Corey McKeon was credited with a season-high 14 tackles, including an 8-yard sack in the second quarter. He now has 35 career tackles-for-loss, just 2.5 short of the Cornhusker career top 10. Senior Steve Octavien finished with 13 tackles, and senior Lance Brandenburg was involved in 12 tackles.



Corey McKeon

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior Andre Jones replaced Cortney Grixby on kickoff returns and responded by gaining 65 yards on three returns. He also returned one punt. "Coach made a decision (on his returning kicks), and I just rolled with it," said Jones. "He asked me to go back there, and I went back there, did what I had to do."



Andre Jones

INJURY REPORT

Cornhusker linebacker Bo Ruud had to be helped from the field 2 1/2 minutes into the game after going down with a knee injury on the defense's first play from scrimmage. He did not return. Less than a minute later, safety Tierre Green left the field after a blindside block and 20 seconds later, linebacker Lance Brandenburg limped from the field. Green and Brandenburg returned, however. Center Brett Byford had to be helped from the field with 15 seconds left in the first half and didn't return. Sophomore Jacob Hickman, who started the game at left guard, moved to center and played the rest of the way. Freshman linebacker Blake Lawrence was sidelined by an ankle injury, and linebacker Phillip Dillard was on the field only briefly because of a quadriceps problem. Coach Bill Callahan had no injury up-dates afterward.

GAME STATS

SCORING

Oct. 20, 2007
Memorial Stadium Lincoln, Neb.
Attendance 84,473

	1	2	3	4	F
Texas A&M	9	7	14	6	36
Nebraska	7	7	0	0	14

First Quarter

	A&M	NU
A&M Taylor Pass from McGee 2-yards (Szymanski Kick Failed) 09:17	6	0
Drive: 9 plays 72 yds 3:20		

NU Castille 3-yard Run (Henery Kick) 06:32	6	7
Drive: 8 plays 80 yds 2:45		

A&M Szymanski 39-yard Field Goal 01:35	9	7
Drive: 17 plays 59 yds 4:57		

Second Quarter

A&M Lane 1-yard Run (Szymanski Kick) 10:38	16	7
Drive: 2 plays 28 yds 0:12		

NU Purify Pass from Keller 10-yards (Henery Kick) 02:26	16	14
Drive: 9 plays 79 yds 4:07		

Third Quarter

A&M Lane 2-yard Run (Szymanski Kick) 11:05	23	14
Drive: 9 plays 80 yds 3:55		

A&M Lane 4-yard Run (Szymanski Kick) 04:29	30	14
Drive: 11 plays 80 yds 4:36		

Fourth Quarter

A&M Lane 1-yard Run (Franks Rush Fail) 04:32	36	14
Drive: 14 plays 76 yds 7:09		

TEAM STATS

	A&M	NU
Total First Downs	28	24
Rushing	21	7
Passing	6	16
Penalty	1	1
Rushing Attempts	66	26
Yards Gained Rushing	378	142
Yards Lost Rushing	19	12
Net Yards Rushing	359	130
Net Yards Passing	100	275
Passes Attempted	22	44
Passes Completed	13	26
Had Intercepted	0	0
Percent Completion	59.1%	59.1%
Yards per Attempt	4.5	6.2
Yards per Completion	7.7	10.6
Total Offensive Plays	88	70
Total Net Yards	459	405
Avg. Gain Per Play	5.2	5.8
Fumbles: No-Lost	0-0	3-3
Penalties: No-Yards	5-38	4-30
Punts: No-Yards	5-200	4-167
Avg. Per Punt	40.0	41.8
Avg. Net Punt	38.0	38.2
Punt Returns: No-Yards	2-14	2-10
Kickoff Returns: No-Yards	0-0	3-65
Interception Returns: No-Yards	0-0	0-0
Fumble Returns: No-Yards	0-0	0-0
Miscellaneous Yards	0	0
Possession Time 36:55	23:05	23:05
Third-Down Conversions	7-15	6-13
Percentage	46.7%	46.2%
Fourth-Down Conversions	2-2	1-3
Percentage	100.0%	33.3%
Sacks By: No-Yards	2-8	2-17



Nebraska interim athletic director Tom Osborne (left) meets current Texas A&M and former NU athletic director Bill Byrne before the game.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

TEXAS A&M

RUSHING							
No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	
McGee	35	184	17	167	4.8	0	19
Lane	15	130	0	130	8.7	4	31
Goodson	8	33	1	32	4.0	0	15
Johnson	4	19	1	18	4.5	0	11
Tarrant	2	7	0	7	3.5	0	6
Smith	1	3	0	3	3.0	0	3
Alexander	1	2	0	2	2.0	0	2
Total	66	378	19	359	5.4	4	31

PASSING							
Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg	
McGee	22	13	59.1	0	100	1	21
Total	22	13	59.1	0	100	1	21

RECEIVING					
No	Yds	TD	Lg		
Brown	4	49	0	21	
Thomas	2	19	0	10	
Alexander	2	16	0	11	
Franks	1	9	0	9	
Lane	1	5	0	5	
Goodson	1	2	0	2	
Taylor	2	0	1	2	
Total	13	100	1	21	

PUNT RETURNS					
No	Yds	TD	Lg		
Holland	1	8	0	8	
Dixon	1	6	0	6	
Total	2	14	0	8	

KICKOFF RETURNS					
No	Yds	TD	Lg		
Total	0	0	0	0	

PUNTING							
No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Brantly	5	40.0	55	0	0	1	2
Total	5	40.0	55	0	0	1	2

FIELD GOALS					
Made	Att	Lg	Blkd		
Szymanski	1	1	39	0	
Total	1	1	39	0	

DEFENSE LEADERS									
Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR		
Dodge	5	6	11	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0
Carpenter	6	1	7	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Dixon	3	4	7	1-4	1-4	0	0	0	0
Tupe	2	5	7	0-2	0-0	0	0	0	0
Pugh	1	4	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Brown	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Smith	2	2	4	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
Gregg	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0
Harrington	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
Featherston	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Patterson	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Thompson	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Miller	1	0	1	1-4	1-4	0	1	0	0
Bryant	0	1	1	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0

NEBRASKA

RUSHING							
No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	
Castille	9	60	0	60	6.7	1	13
Helu	5	39	0	39	7.8	0	15
Lucky	8	24	1	23	2.9	0	9
Hardy	1	19	0	19	19.0	0	19
Keller	3	0	11	-11	-3.7	0	0
Total	26	142	12	130	5.0	1	19

PASSING							
Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg	
Keller	44	26	59.1	0	275	1	26
Total	44	26	59.1	0	275	1	26

RECEIVING					
No	Yds	TD	Lg		
Lucky	13	125	0	26	
Purify	3	42	1	17	
Swift	3	40	0	21	
Hill	3	33	0	13	
Nunn	2	27	0	17	
Erickson	1	6	0	6	
Helu	1	2	0	2	
Total	26	275	1	26	

PUNT RETURNS					
No	Yds	TD	Lg		
Jones	1	10	0	10	
Swift	1	0	0	0	
Total	2	10	0	10	

KICKOFF RETURNS					
No	Yds	TD	Lg		
Jones	3	65	0	31	
Total	3	65	0	31	

PUNTING									
No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20		
Titchener	4	41.8	44	0	1	0	0	1	
Total	4	41.8	44	0	1	0	0	1	

DEFENSE											
Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR				
McKeon	3	11	14	1-8	1-8	1	0	0	0	0	0
Octavien	5	8	13	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brandenburg	3	12	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asante	5	5	10	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Green	3	3	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murillo	2	4	6	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Culbert	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eisenhart	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barfield	0	3	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Covey	2	1	3	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Potter	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sievers	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Suh	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grixby	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thenarse	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
West	2	0	2	2-11	1-9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Johnson	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jones	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lawrence	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Steinkuhler	1	0	1	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turner	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bowman	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0

2007 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

	G	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Lucky, Marlon	8	146	752	31	721	4.9	6	41	90.1
Castille, Quentin	8	59	285	1	284	4.8	4	23	35.5
Helu, Roy	4	29	136	3	133	4.6	0	15	33.2
Glenn, Cody	4	26	86	9	77	3.0	2	20	19.2
Culbert, Major	6	5	35	0	35	7.0	1	17	5.8
Hardy, Frantz	8	1	19	0	19	19.0	0	19	2.4
Ganz, Joe	2	2	15	0	15	7.5	0	9	7.5
Purify, Maurice	7	1	8	0	8	8.0	0	8	1.1
Nunn, Terrence	8	3	4	14	-10	-3.3	0	4	-1.2
Keller, Sam	8	23	19	79	-60	-2.6	0	4	-7.5

PASSING

	G	Att	Comp	% Int	Yds	TD	Lg	YD/G
Keller, Sam	8	290	182	62.8	10	2124	12	73 265.5
Lucky, Marlon	8	1	1	100.0	0	20	1	20 2.5
Ganz, Joe	2	1	1	100.0	0	19	0	19 9.5

RECEIVING LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Lucky, Marlon	8	49	388	7.9	1	26	48.5
Purify, Maurice	7	28	374	13.4	2	38	53.4
Swift, Nate	8	23	296	12.9	1	21	37.0
Nunn, Terrence	8	23	270	11.7	0	30	33.8
Hill, Sean	8	14	262	18.7	3	73	32.8
Peterson, Todd	8	10	169	16.9	2	44	21.1
Hardy, Frantz	8	9	142	15.8	0	60	17.8
Erickson, Dan	8	5	52	10.4	0	19	6.5
Glenn, Cody	4	6	52	8.7	0	19	13.0
Helu, Roy	4	3	28	9.3	0	21	7.0
McNeill, Mike	3	1	25	25.0	0	25	8.3
Teafatiller, Hunter	7	3	21	7.0	0	11	3.0
Phillips, J.B.	8	2	19	9.5	1	13	2.4
Castille, Quentin	8	1	15	15.0	0	15	1.9
Sand, Andy	8	1	15	15.0	0	15	1.9
Young, Dreu	6	1	14	14.0	0	14	2.3
Lawson, Thomas	6	3	11	3.7	3	6	1.8

PUNT RETURNS LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Grixby, Cortney	8	7	36	5.1	0	16	4.5
Jones, Andre	7	3	35	11.7	0	24	5.0

KICKOFF RETURNS LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Grixby, Cortney	8	29	720	24.8	0	51	90.0
Jones, Andre	7	12	266	22.2	0	31	38.0

PUNTING

	G	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener, Dan	8	33	41.2	51	0	3	7	1	10	
Henery, Alex	8	1	32.0	32	0	0	0	0	1	

FIELD GOALS

	G	Att	Made	Lg	Blkd
Henery, Alex	8	5	5	39	0
Kunalic, Adi	8	1	1	46	0

DEFENSE LEADERS

	G	Tack	Ass	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Octavien, Steve	8	32	20	52	5-28	0-4	2	0	0
McKeon, Corey	8	22	29	51	5-16	1-8	5	0	1
Asante, Larry	8	20	27	47	0-0	0-0	1	1	0
Brandenburg, L.	8	31	12	43	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Murillo, Armando	8	24	19	43	0-0	0-0	6	0	0
Ruud, Bo	8	22	20	42	3-9	0-0	1	2	0
Potter, Zach	8	20	16	36	8-20	2-10	1	1	1
Green, Tierre	8	11	21	32	0-0	0-0	3	0	0
Dillard, Phillip	8	18	11	29	0-1	0-0	2	0	0
Bowman, Zackary	7	18	6	24	0-0	0-0	4	0	0
Suh, Ndamukong	8	18	6	24	6-29	1-6	0	0	1

TEAM STATISTICS

	NU	OPP
Total First Downs	187	190
Rushing	60	89
Passing	110	89
Penalty	17	12
Total Net Yards	3376	3659
Total Plays	591	621
Yards Per Play	5.7	5.9
Yards Per Game	422.0	457.4
Rushing Attempts-Yards	299-1213	355-1819
Yards Per Attempt	4.1	5.1
Yards Per Game	151.6	227.4
Pass Att.-Comp.-Int.	292-184-10	266-151-7
Passing Yards	2163	1840
Yards Per Completion	11.8	12.2
Yards Per Game	270.4	230.0
Punting: No.-Avg.	34-41.0	37-40.9
Fumbles-Lost	13-9	11-3
Penalties-Yards	48-380	54-457
Sacks By-Yds. Lost	8-51	11-70
Third-Down Conversions	52-117	56-120
Conversion Pct.	44.4	46.7
Fourth-Down Conversions	6-13	8-11
Conversion Pct.	46.2	72.7
Avg. Time Of Possession	29:27	30:33

Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
Nebraska	34	58	59	62	0	213
Opponents	50	85	77	43	0	255

2007 RESULTS, SCHEDULE

1 Sept. 1	Nevada (3-4), W 52-10	1-0
2 Sept. 8	@Wake Forest (5-2), W 20-17	2-0
3 Sept. 15	USC (6-1), L 49-31	2-1
4 Sept. 22	Ball State (5-3), W 41-40	3-1
5 Sept. 29	Iowa State (1-6), W 35-17	4-1
6 Oct. 6	@Missouri (6-1), L 41-6	4-2
7 Oct. 13	Oklahoma St. (5-3), L 45-14	4-3
8 Oct. 20	Texas A&M (6-2), L 36-14	4-4
9 Oct. 27	@Texas (6-2), 2:30 p.m., ABC	
10 Nov. 3	@Kansas (7-0), TBA	
11 Nov. 10	Kansas State (4-3), TBA	
12 Nov. 23	@Colorado (4-4), 11 a.m., ABC	
Dec. 1	Big 12 Championship at San Antonio, Texas, 7 p.m., ABC	

SCOUTING REPORT

GAME 9

At Texas Oct. 27

Location: Austin, Texas

Enrollment: 37,069

2007 record: 6-2

Coach: Mack Brown, 10th year

Series: Texas leads 7-4

2:30 p.m., ABC

Memorial Stadium, Austin, Texas

Quick Facts

Texas has won two straight since opening the conference schedule with losses to Kansas State and Oklahoma.

The Longhorns' 31-10 victory over Baylor was close most of the way. UT trailed 7-3 in the second quarter

and led just 17-10 in the fourth before interceptions led to two TDs.

All-Big 12 receiver Limas Sweed is out for the season after undergoing surgery to repair a left wrist ligament.

Mack Brown has won 99 games at Texas.

Longhorn to Watch

Sophomore quarterback Colt McCoy ranks No. 6 on UT's career passing list with 4,739 yards. This season, McCoy has completed 67.3 percent of his passes for 2,169 yards and 15 touchdowns. As a redshirt freshman, he passed for 2,570 yards and 29 touchdowns, earning Big 12 Offensive Newcomer of the Year honors.



BIG 12 AT A GLANCE

North					South				
	W	L	T		W	L	T		
Kansas	3	0	7	0	Oklahoma	3	1	7	1
Missouri	2	1	6	1	Texas A&M	3	1	6	2
Kansas St.	2	2	4	3	Okla. St.	3	1	5	3
Colorado	2	2	4	4	Texas	2	2	6	2
Nebraska	1	3	4	4	Texas Tech	2	2	6	2
Iowa State	0	4	1	7	Baylor	0	4	3	5

Saturday, Oct. 20

Texas A&M 36, Nebraska 14
Texas 31, Baylor 10
Kansas 19, Colorado 14
Oklahoma State 41, Kansas State 39
Oklahoma 17, Iowa State 7
Missouri 41, Texas Tech 10

ON DECK

At Kansas Nov. 3

Location: Lawrence, Kan

Enrollment: 29,624

2007 record: 7-0

Coach: Mark Mangino, 6th year

Series: Nebraska leads 62-34-3

Time: TBA

Memorial Stadium, Lawrence, Kan.



THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION

TENTATIVE 2-DEEPS

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

WR	87	Nate Swift**	6-2	200	Jr.
	16	Maurice Purify*	6-4	220	Sr.
LT	77	Carl Nicks*	6-5	330	Sr.
	65	Mike Smith	6-6	285	RFr.
LG	57	Jacob Hickman*	6-4	285	So.
	68	Keith Williams	6-5	310	RFr.
C	59	Brett Byford*	6-3	300	Sr.
	57	Jacob Hickman*	6-4	285	So.
RG	61	Mike Huff**	6-4	300	Jr.
	73	D.J. Jones	6-5	310	RFr.
RT	76	Lydon Murtha**	6-7	305	Jr.
	70	Matt Stauson**	6-5	335	Jr.
HB	86	Sean Hill	6-3	250	Sr.
	85	J.B. Phillips***	6-3	245	Sr.
WR	83	Terrence Nunn***	6-0	190	Sr.
	7	Frantz Hardy**	6-1	190	Sr.
QB	9	Sam Keller	6-4	230	Sr.
	12	Joe Ganz*	6-1	200	Jr.
FB	36	Thomas Lawson*	6-0	240	Jr.
	48	Andy Sand	6-2	230	Sr.
IB	5	Marlon Lucky**	6-0	210	Jr.
	34	Cody Glenn	6-0	230	Jr.
PK	90	Alex Henery	6-2	170	RFr.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

DE	99	Barry Turner**	6-3	270	Jr.
	88	Clayton Sievers**	6-4	245	Jr.
NT	93	Ndamukong Suh*	6-4	305	So.
	56	Shukree Barfield	6-4	310	Jr.
DT	43	Ty Steinkuhler**	6-3	285	Jr.
	97	Kevin Dixon	6-3	295	Jr.
DE	98	Zach Potter**	6-7	280	Jr.
	95	Pierre Allen	6-5	265	RFr.
SLB	51	Bo Ruud***	6-3	235	Sr.
	12	Blake Lawrence	6-2	220	Fr.
MLB	13	Corey McKeon**	6-1	225	Sr.
	52	Phillip Dillard*	6-1	250	So.
WLB	40	Lance Brandenburg***	6-1	230	Sr.
	15	Steve Octavian*	6-0	240	Sr.
LCB	5	Armando Murillo	6-0	195	Jr.
	25	Andre Jones*	6-0	190	Sr.
FS	30	Tierre Green***	6-1	200	Sr.
	3	Rickey Thenarse*	6-0	190	So.
SS	4	Larry Asante	6-1	210	So.
	9	Bryan Wilson*	6-1	205	Sr.
RCB	1	Zack Bowman*	6-2	200	Sr.
	2	Cortney Grixby***	5-9	170	Sr.
P	97	Dan Titchener*	6-0	200	Jr.

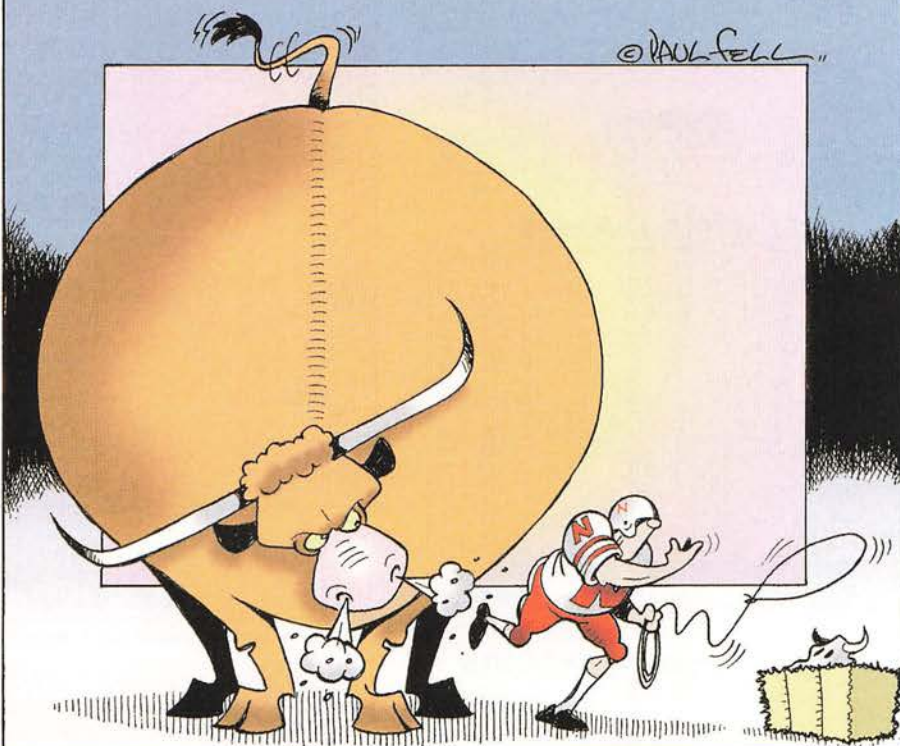
TEXAS OFFENSE

WR	6	Quan Cosby**	5-11	200	Jr.
	8	Jordan Shipley*	6-0	188	Jr.
LT	79	Tony Hills***	6-6	295	Sr.
	56	Tray Allen	6-5	310	Fr.
LG	52	Charlie Tanner*	6-4	280	So.
	72	Britt Mitchell	6-5	250	RFr.
C	67	Dallas Griffin**	6-4	280	Sr.
	71	Chris Hall*	6-4	280	So.
RG	71	Chris Hall*	6-4	280	So.
	55	Cedrick Dockery**	6-4	325	Jr.
RT	74	Adam Ulatoski**	6-8	285	So.
	64	Kyle Hix	6-7	320	Fr.
TE	16	Jermichael Finley*	6-5	220	So.
	86	Peter Ullman**	6-4	252	Jr.
WR	9	Nate Jones***	6-2	190	Sr.
	23	Brandon Collins	6-0	170	Fr.
QB	12	Colt McCoy*	6-3	195	So.
	7	John Chiles	6-2	187	Fr.
TB	25	Jamaal Charles**	6-1	190	Jr.
	3	Chris Ogbonnaya*	6-1	215	Jr.
FB	3	Chris Ogbonnaya*	6-1	215	Jr.
	49	Luke Tiemann*	6-2	235	Jr.
PK	39	Ryan Bailey*	6-2	180	Jr.

TEXAS DEFENSE

DE	98	Brian Orakpo**	6-4	238	Jr.
	32	Eddie Jones	6-3	240	RFr.
DT	97	Frank Okam***	6-5	315	Sr.
	99	Roy Miller**	6-2	300	Jr.
NT	96	Derek Lokey***	6-2	275	Sr.
	99	Roy Miller**	6-2	300	Jr.
DE	36	Lamarr Houston*	6-2	257	So.
	95	Aaron Lewis**	6-4	275	Jr.
SLB	40	Robert Killebrew***	6-2	225	Sr.
	42	Dustin Earnest	6-3	217	RFr.
MLB	44	Rashad Bobino**	5-11	230	Jr.
	11	Jared Norton*	6-3	236	So.
WLB	33	Scott Derry**	6-3	230	Sr.
	38	Rodrick Muckelroy*	6-2	230	So.
LCB	28	Brandon Foster**	5-9	180	Sr.
	3	Curtis Brown	6-1	175	Fr.
SS	6	Erick Jackson**	6-2	185	Sr.
	19	Ishie Oduogwu*	5-10	195	So.
FS	25	Marcus Griffin**	6-0	190	Sr.
	4	Drew Kelson***	6-2	210	Sr.
RCB	29	Ryan Palmer**	5-10	182	Jr.
	7	Daon Beasley*	5-10	168	So.
P	17	Trevor Gerland	6-2	190	So.

NEBRASKA vs. TEXAS



OCTOBER 27, 2007
HUSKERS ARRIVE IN AUSTIN WITH AMBITIONS TO ROPE AND HOGTIE THE LONGHORNS!

Picks

Oct.
25-27



Brian Hill
Editor



Mike Babcock
Cont. Editor



Terry Douglass
G.I. Independent



Sean Callahan
KFAB/Rivals.com



Jon Wofford
KLNH TV-Lincoln
(Guest)

Nebraska @Texas	Texas 38, Nebraska 20	Texas 42, Nebraska 17	Texas 37, Nebraska 17	Texas 38, Nebraska 21	Texas 35, Nebraska 17
Kansas @Texas A&M	Kansas 24, Texas A&M 21	Texas A&M 21, Kansas 20	Texas A&M 20, Kansas 17	Texas A&M 31, Kansas 30	Kansas 42, Texas A&M 10
Colorado @Texas Tech	Texas Tech 37, Colorado 24	Texas Tech 35, Colorado 21	Texas Tech 48, Colorado 21	Texas Tech 41, Colorado 31	Texas Tech 38, Colorado 21
Boston College @Virginia Tech	BC 27, Va. Tech 24	Va. Tech 35, BC 31	Va. Tech 27, BC 10	Va. Tech 13, BC 20	Va. Tech 21, BC 17
Last Week Season	1-3 17-15	1-3 22-10	4-0 23-9	4-0 25-7	2-2 20-12

Good Fit

Cornerback from Texas just likes Nebraska

By Rick Shaw

It's been a rough season for the Nebraska defense. The Huskers have given up a large amount of yards and points to their opponents and, consequently,

are ranked at the bottom of most Big 12 defensive statistical categories. The coaching staff is making efforts to remedy bolster the defensive side for the future.

Nebraska has quietly put together one of the nation's strongest recruiting classes for 2008. The Huskers ranked No. 7 in Rivals.com's team recruiting rankings heading into the latter half of October with a conference leading 24 oral commitments.



David Whitmore

Three of those pledges come from athletes designated to help fortify the secondary when they arrive in Lincoln.

One of the earliest Nebraska pledges came from Texan David Whitmore of Port Arthur Memorial High School. The 6-foot-2, 190 pound athlete joined the Husker fold back in April, turning down scholarship offers from Oklahoma State, Kansas State and Missouri.

Rated as the nation's No. 18 cornerback recruit and the No. 60 player in Texas (three stars) by Rivals.com, Whitmore gained the interest of several major college coaches during his junior season. Blessed with good size

NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2008

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	Hometown (School)
Will Compton	LB	6-2	214	4.5	Bonne Terre, Mo. (North County)
Sean Fisher	LB	6-5	210	4.6	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
Blaine Gabbert	QB	6-4	226	4.65	Ballwin, Mo. (Parkway West)
Bryce Givens	OL	6-6	257	5.1	Denver, Colo. (J.K. Mullen)
Jonas Gray	RB	5-10	213	4.44	Detroit, Mich. (Country Day)
Eric Harper	DE	6-4	220	4.62	Marrero La. (John Ehret)
Ricky Henry	OL	6-4	300	5.2	Omaha, Neb. (Burke/North Dakota State College of Science)
Tyson Hetzer	TE	6-7	265	4.75	Glendora, Calif. (Citrus CC)
Adrian Hilburn	WR	6-2	190	4.4	San Francisco, Calif. (City College of SF)
Dan Hoch	OL	6-6	295	5.21	Harlan, Iowa
Keelan Johnson	DB	6-0	195	4.5	Mesa, Ariz.
John Levorson	ATH	6-4	185	4.55	Crete, Neb.
Cameron Meredith	DE	6-4	222	4.6	Santa Ana, Calif. (Mater Dei)
Shaun Mohler	LB	6-3	225	4.6	Costa Mesa, Calif. (Orange Coast CC)
Collins Okafor	RB	6-1	210	4.54	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)
Darius Parish	DT	6-3	325	5.08	Wichita, Kan.
Kyler Reed	ATH	6-3	204	4.5	Overland Park, Kan. (St. Thomas Aquinas)
Riley Reiff	DE	6-6	235	4.8	Parkston, S.D.
Doug Rippy	LB	6-2	218	4.6	Columbus, Ohio (McKinley)
Baker Steinkuhler	OL	6-6	290	4.88	Lincoln, Neb. (Southwest)
Brandon Thompson	OL	6-6	280	5.08	The Woodlands, Texas
David Whitmore	DB	6-2	190	4.5	Port Arthur, Texas (Memorial)
Josh Williams	DE	6-4	220	4.8	Denton, Texas (Ryan)
D.J. Woods	WR	6-0	169	4.35	Strongsville, Ohio

For more daily recruiting information, visit HuskersIllustrated.com, a member of the Rivals.com network.

RECRUITING NOTES

'Blown Away by Everything'

By Sean Stevens

It's becoming a bit of a broken record. We talk about a recruit visiting Nebraska and coming away impressed, then the following week we're discussing the prospect's subsequent oral commitment to the Huskers.

This week's new commitment is offensive tackle Brandon Thompson (6-foot-6, 280 pounds) of The Woodlands, Texas.

Thompson visited Lincoln for the Huskers' victory over Iowa State in late September, and said after the trip, "I was pretty much blown away by everything. It was extremely nice. Everything went great. It puts them as one of my top choices right now. I was just really excited (before the trip) because I know the tradition they have there and the football program. I mean the program for offensive linemen there is one of the best."



Brandon Thompson

Thompson is ranked by Rivals.com as the No. 78 player in Texas and the 53rd best offensive tackle in the country. That may sound like Thompson is a long way down the list for offensive tackles; however, this is an unusual year for talent at the offensive tackle position. There are 29 tackles ranked among the top 250 players at all positions.

The Woodlands offensive line coach Jim Rapp gave a breakdown of his pupil's ability.

"He's an athletic big man. He's big, has got great feet, can run. I think he's going to end up being a pretty physical blocker," Rapp said. "He's making big strides there. And a pretty good pass protector."

Thompson chose NU over offers from Oklahoma State, Purdue, Texas A&M and Texas Tech.

☆☆☆

With three of the last five games on the road, opportunities to impress uncommitted prospects are running out. The Huskers were to play host to at least five official visitors for the Oct. 20 Texas A&M game, led by junior college defensive linemen Simi Kuli (6-4, 270) and Justin Thompson (6-5, 280), both of El Camino Community College in Torrance, Calif.

Kuli is ranked by Rivals.com as the top junior college player in the country at any position. He has already visited LSU and will likely also see Oklahoma and USC before making a decision.

Kuli's teammate Thompson visited LSU with him. He's considering USC, Oregon, and Cal.

Tight end Tyler Edwards (6-3, 222) of Monroe, La., was also scheduled to make the trip to Lincoln. Edwards is the No. 13-ranked tight end nationally by Rivals. It might be an uphill battle, but the Huskers have a decent shot with him.

"I'm pretty set on LSU, Alabama, Miami, Florida and Nebraska," Edwards said. "LSU and Alabama are recruiting me the hardest, and I'd say they're still at the top. Miami, Florida and Nebraska are pretty even right after them."

Defensive tackle Quentin Toailoa (6-5, 275) of Redlands, Calif., is the remaining uncommitted visitor. The big man also has offers from Arizona and Oregon State, but his first visit will be to NU.

"My mom wants me to go check them out, so I am going to go check them out," Toailoa said. "She really likes like coach Joe Rudolph."

Also scheduled to visit was committed defensive back David Whitmore (6-2, 190) of Port Arthur, Texas. ■

and speed (4.5-second 40-yard dash), he tallied 90 total tackles, 13 pass breakups and two interceptions in 2006.

Despite Nebraska's early struggles on the football field, Whitmore said he's still solidly committed.

"I'm still excited about Nebraska," Whitmore said. "I talk to Coach (Buddy) Wyatt a lot. He's been talking to me and trying to get me up there on an official visit. I'm scheduled to go up there and see them when Texas A&M plays Nebraska."

"I watched Nebraska as a kid. I just loved watching them and Eric Crouch. I just like Nebraska. I like the offense and the defense — everything. I fit in good with them."

Another out-of-state prospect pegged for the Husker defensive backfield is Keelan Johnson out of Mesa, Ariz. The 6-0, 195-pound athlete delivered his pledge to Nebraska coaches back in July.

A two-way standout at Mesa, Johnson earned first-team all-regional honors as a running back in 2006. He totaled 1,100 rushing yards and 20 touchdowns as a junior, showing the ability to make good things happen with the ball in his hands. The University of Arizona extended him a scholarship offer for his skills on the offensive side of the ball. However, in the end, Johnson decided that Lincoln was a better fit for him as a student athlete.

"At first, it was a hard choice," Johnson said. "I wanted to play offense, and Arizona had offered me a scholarship to play running back for them. After I thought about it though, I thought the best decision was to play defense at Nebraska."

"I think the Nebraska fans and school take football a lot more seriously up there. Arizona might have a sellout game once in a while, like when USC comes to town. Nebraska always does. I like that."

Johnson is currently rated the No. 19 player in the state (three stars) by Rivals.com.

Another safety recruit opting to spend his college years in Nebraska is John Levorson of Crete, Neb. The 6-4, 185-pound athlete chose the Huskers after also considering scholarship offers from Wyoming and Ohio.

Levorson was named the state's top player in Class B as a junior after leading Crete to a state championship. The first-team all-Nebraska selection rushed for 756 yards and nine touchdowns and passed for 1,580 and another 17 scores from the quarterback position. On defense, he tallied 80 tackles and seven interceptions as a starting safety.

"The Nebraska coaches have told me that will try me out at safety first and then wide receiver and maybe, eventually, linebacker," Levorson said.

"As far as why I picked Nebraska, I don't know what to say. It's my home state and a good school. Playing for my home state has a little more meaning."

Rated the No. 6 player in the state by Rivals.com (two stars), Levorson is widely considered one of the top overall high school athletes in the area.

"I think he's just a natural athlete, and he competes at whatever he's doing," Crete coach Jeff McGinnis said. "That's one thing that maybe we overlook sometimes, and that's how competitive he is. He just wants to

win and be successful, and he knows what it takes to do that."

The Huskers hope to add an additional defensive back or two to their recruiting class before the February signing day. One of the prospects at the top of their current wish list is Adrian Bushell. The 5-11, 180-pound speedster (4.4 40) out of DeSoto, Texas, holds scholarship offers from a host of the nation's top college programs, including Florida, Cal, Michigan, Oklahoma, Louisville and others. Despite all of the heavy interest, the blue-chipper from the Lone Star State held one team at the front of the pack during the early stages of October.

"My top six teams are Nebraska, Florida, Texas Tech, Cal, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State," Bushell said. "Right now, I'd say that Nebraska has the lead. That will be the first school that I take a visit to.

"With Nebraska, I really like the way they're recruiting me. Them and Florida are probably recruiting me the hardest. I also like the fact that I'd probably be able to go in there and compete for a spot early."

Rated the No. 21 prospect in the

state and one of the nation's top 250 prospects overall by Rivals.com, Bushell said he likely won't make his final college decision until sometime after the first of the year.

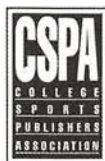
Another cornerback giving Nebraska strong consideration is Leonard Johnson out of Largo, Fla. The 5-10, 177-pound athlete has already taken a visit to see Iowa State and said he wants to take a couple of more trips before solidifying a final decision.

"I have offers from Iowa State, Nebraska, West Virginia, Troy, Ole Miss, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa," Johnson said. "I really liked my visit to Iowa State. I was really impressed with everything I saw there. There isn't one thing I'd change about the place.

"With that said, I really want to get out and see both Nebraska and West Virginia. Just looking at the background of Nebraska and knowing that all of their defensive backs have a good chance of going to the next level. That's big." ■

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Always the Perfectionist

When teams do everything they can to stop her, Sarah Pavan turns to her all-around game to help the Huskers win.

Senior Pavan knows she's not going to be perfect every time, but she strives to be

By Bob Hamar

Sarah Pavan can dominate on the volleyball court.

That's just what the Nebraska senior did in an Oct. 10 match against Iowa State at the NU Coliseum. The Cyclones had played well throughout most of the opening game and had the Huskers on the ropes.

But when the chips were down,

Pavan stepped up.

"I thought we played really well that first game," Iowa State coach Christy Johnson said. "We had a lot of energy. All the things we said we had to do before the match started, I thought we did them that first game. Pavan took over, and then the game was over."

It's not the first time Pavan has done that, and it probably won't be the last. With an all-star cast of team-

mates, Pavan doesn't have to do that often.

But the Huskers weren't playing particular well against Iowa State. Somebody had to step up and take control. That somebody was Pavan.

Pavan, the 2006 AVCA national player of the year, admits that the pressure on her sometimes gets pretty intense.

"There's always some pressure," Pavan said. "I mean I don't focus on the pressure. I kind of enjoy it because I like to play under those circumstances. I just go out there and play every night to the best of my abilities to help my team win."

"If my team is winning, then I'm happy."

Pavan, always the perfectionist on the court and in the classroom, wants to be perfect in everything she does. But now, as her senior season begins



Sarah Pavan, who could become a four-time All-American, is once again leading Nebraska in kills.

to wind down, the 6-foot-5 rightside hitter from Kitchener, Ontario, knows that perfection can't be reached on the volleyball court.

"I do expect perfection for myself and the people I play with," Pavan said. "I realize that volleyball is a game of mistakes, and you're not going to be perfect every time. As much as I want that, I've grown to realize it's not going to happen.

"I am more calm than I used to be regarding that, but it's still there."

Nebraska coach John Cook said Pavan is still improving. He said she took an important step in developing her game early in the season in a win over Penn State.

The Nittany Lions were selling out to stop Pavan. The first two games they were able to slow her down significantly, but Pavan took over in the third game.

"To me Sarah made a great step against Penn State," Cook said. "The step was she was struggling in the first two games. She knew they were doing everything they could to stop her, but in the third game, she took it up a notch.

"Even though they still had the same game plan, she found a way to be successful. She had most of her kills in game three against Penn State, so she made mentally a great adjustment there."

Things didn't go as well for Pavan in a match at Colorado early in October. Cook pulled Pavan off the court during the second game of a three-game sweep because he wasn't happy with her defensive effort.

"I think you have to hold your best players to the highest accountability," Cook said. "Sometimes players just need to regroup a little bit and get their focus back."

Pavan, who could become Nebraska's first ever four-time, first-team All-American this year, has rarely had any trouble with being focused. This season she is once again leading the Huskers in kills. Her hitting percentage probably won't reach the .357 mark she produced in 2005, but she has been in the .330s all season which is impressive in itself.

Cook said it's usually easier for a rightside hitter to hit a high percentage than an outside hitter, but it's different for Pavan.

"It's easier for rightside hitters because you get better sets," Cook said. "Although the way we use Pavan, she's our out-of-system player so that's going to hurt her. For her to hit over .300 is a major accomplishment."

Even Pavan isn't going to be great every night. Some nights, teams are going to do everything they can to stop her. Cook said that's when she has to use her all-around game to help the Huskers win.

"She understands some nights it's going to be that way, but she can still score points with serving, defense and blocking," Cook said. "She's developed that mentality where a couple of years ago, all she worried about was hitting. That's why I think she's maturing into a player that can go to another level."

Whatever happens, Pavan isn't likely to get too excited. That just isn't her style.

Pavan has kept an even keel throughout most her college career. She also isn't one to yell and scream. Pavan is more of a leader by example.

"I always act the same," Pavan said. "I don't talk a lot. I'm pretty quiet, but I work really hard every day to make myself and my teammates better. That is leadership in its own way. I'm definitely not a cheerleader and I never will be. I do what I can to make this team as good as possible." ■

Bob Hamar covers the Nebraska volleyball team for the Grand Island (Neb.) Independent. He can be reached at bob.hamar@theindependent.com

RESULTS, SCHEDULE

AVCA Showcase

At Qwest Center Omaha

Aug. 24	vs. Tennessee	W 3-0
Aug. 25	vs. UCLA	W 3-1

Holiday Inn Classic

NU Coliseum/Qwest Center Omaha

Aug. 31	vs. Creighton (NU)	W 3-0
Sept. 2	vs. Penn St. (Omaha)	W 3-0
Sept. 3	vs. Cal Poly (NU)	W 3-0

Ameritas Players Challenge NU Coliseum

Sept. 7	vs. Duke	W 3-0
Sept. 8	vs. New Mexico St.	W 3-0

(Home matches at NU Coliseum, unless noted)

Sept. 12	Texas	W 3-0
Sept. 15	@Texas Tech	W 3-0
Sept. 22	Texas A&M	W 3-0
Sept. 26	@Kansas	W 3-0
Sept. 29	Baylor	W 3-0
Oct. 3	Kansas State	W 3-0
Oct. 6	@Colorado	W 3-0
Oct. 10	Iowa State	W 3-0
Oct. 13	@Oklahoma	W 3-0
Oct. 17	@Missouri	W 3-0
Oct. 20	Kansas	6 p.m.
Oct. 21	Hawaii (Devaney)	5 p.m.
Oct. 24	@Texas	6:30 p.m.
Oct. 31	Missouri	7 p.m.
Nov. 3	@Kansas State	7 p.m.
Nov. 7	Colorado	7 p.m.
Nov. 11	@Iowa State	3 p.m.
Nov. 14	@Texas A&M	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 17	Oklahoma	7 p.m.
Nov. 21	@Baylor	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 24	Texas Tech	7 p.m.

Nov. 29-Dec. 2 NCAA First/Second Rounds At Campus Sites

Dec. 7-8 NCAA Regionals At Campus Sites

Dec 13-15 NCAA Final Four At Sacramento, Calif.

A Lot to Learn

Balham had to learn English as well as basketball

By Mike Babcock

Chris Balham grew up playing soccer. He never played basketball until he was 11-years old. In fact, he might have been 12-years old. He's not sure about that. What he does know for sure is that he didn't begin playing basketball until his family moved to the Chicago area — from France.

Balham was born in Paris, where soccer is much more popular than basketball. When he got to Chicago, however, the reverse was true. Even though he was a good soccer player, and his middle school had a soccer team, "if you wanted to be a cool guy, you wouldn't play soccer," he said.

"That was the first thing I learned."

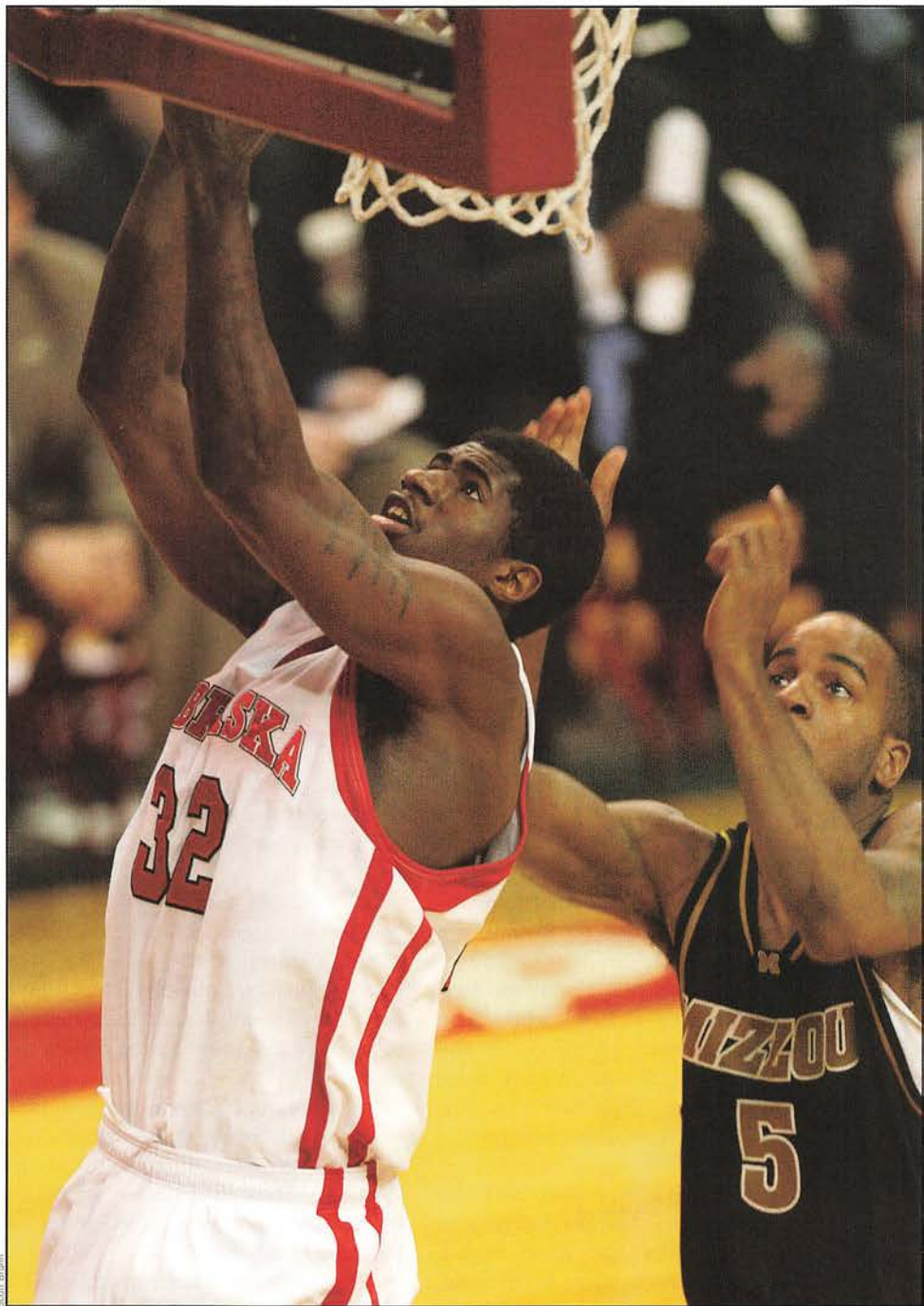
It was the first thing he learned about athletics, anyway. The first thing he learned after arriving in the United States was the English language. And he did that by watching television, mainly cartoons.

"SpongeBob SquarePants" was among his favorites.

He would watch the television shows and repeat the words he heard, often carrying on conversations with his brothers. "I'd say some things I didn't even know what they meant," he said.

Learning enough English to get by took him "three or four months."

By then, he had started school, a difficult adjustment given his problems with English. He had been excited about moving to the United



Chris Balham played in 26 games as a redshirt freshman.

States, but at times he wanted to move back to Paris.

"The language was a big part of it, but then school, it was kind of different, too. I didn't know how the students were or anything," said

Balham. "I knew what I could do not to make somebody mad, to tick off somebody. I had to learn the slang to fit in. That was probably the hardest part. I looked around to see how they acted. I had one friend, and after that



Second-year head coach Doc Sadler (white t-shirt) leads the team through an early practice.

I started meeting more and more people."

Basketball played an important role in meeting people, once he got the hang of the sport.

He was taller than most of his classmates, who assumed he had played basketball before. When they saw him on the court as a freshman, however, they weren't particularly impressed.

"People were talking like I was tall for nothing," Balham said.

"Seeing me tall, they expected me to do this great stuff."

That freshman season was difficult at first. "You've got all these instructions, all these people. 'What am I supposed to do?' It was new for me. But the coach helped me a lot," he said.

His family moved to Kansas City, Kan., before his sophomore year in high school. He attended Shawnee Mission West and developed quickly, taking his lack of experience into account.

He started as a junior, averaging 9.5 points, 8.5 rebounds and three blocked shots for an 11-10 team that had a reputation for defense. As a senior, he led the team to the Class 6A championship game, averaging 11 points, 11 rebounds and four blocked shots.

He was all-conference and all-county and earned all-state honorable mention.

By his senior year, Balham was confident enough in his basketball ability to believe he would be able to continue playing in college. So when schools began recruiting him, he wasn't surprised.

"I knew I was going to play somewhere," he said. "I knew that."

His choices came down to Boston College, Tulsa and Nebraska.

He picked Nebraska because of academic as well as basketball considerations. "I felt I had a chance to get a real good degree here," said Balham, who is majoring in international studies.

He's working toward a minor in Spanish.

Balham redshirted his freshman year and was eager to compete for playing time his second season. But a problem with weakness in his legs sent him to the hospital in November.

One minute he was practicing, the next minute he had collapsed, unable to stand. He was rushed by ambulance to the hospital, where he spent two days, not knowing what was wrong.

"It was scary," Balham said. "I'm like, 'This can't be good. If I'm here for two days, this can't be good.' But I kept on believing in God and praying hard."

His attitude became, "whatever happens, happens," he said.

Doctors couldn't pinpoint the problem. They still haven't. But he

was able to return to practice, despite being limited by the mysterious malady. He played in brief stretches, appearing in 26 games. The problem began to subside. Then, after postseason knee surgery, it went away.

There was no correlation between the surgery and the problem disappearing, however.

Through the ordeal, "my teammates were there for me," he said. "I really appreciate that, my family, too. I kept my faith, getting me through this. I just kept being myself."

During the summer, Balham suffered a broken thumb, dunking the ball.

But he was healthy for the start of practice and eager to contribute to coach Doc Sadler's second team. He's still developing as a basketball player. On a 1-to-10 scale, "I'd say, realistically, I'm a 6 1/2 or 7. I've still got a lot to learn. That's probably what I am," said Balham, who's 6-foot-8, 235 pounds.

"I'm really excited about this season. I can't wait."

Americans often stereotype the French as rude, but that's not the case, Balham said. "I don't know about other people, but I was nice. I'm not rude at all. I don't think we're rude."

Besides, "French people say bad stuff about American people," he said.

He laughed. A stereotype is a stereotype in any language. ■



Freshman Kelsey Grushecky won the 100-meter butterfly in the season-opening victory over Illinois.

'It's Really Cool' to Swim for School

Pennsylvanian Grushecky enjoys being part of a team as a Husker freshman

By KATELYN KERKHOVE

Kelsey Grushecky had never competed for a school before.

She had never donned the swimsuit of her institution or seen a crowd decked out in the school colors — say, red, for instance.

That was, until she dove into the pool for Nebraska.

From West Newton, Pa., a town of 3,000, Grushecky graduated never having swum for her high school because it didn't have a pool. While it didn't matter at the time, Grushecky is realizing the difference now.

"It's really cool," Grushecky said. "We had our first meet (Oct. 12), and swimming and representing a school was so different than just (representing) a small (YMCA) team. I just have a lot of pride representing my school. Whenever I swim now, it's not just for me; it's on a bigger scale because it helps everyone else."

The Cornhuskers' opening meet against Illinois — a victory — was the first time Grushecky had competed on a team outside of that Y-league she swam for while she was in high school.

She grew up a swimmer, with her mom introducing her to the sport

when she was 6-years-old. While her two older sisters participated as well, Grushecky was the only one to continue into high school and, now, in college.

Her parents plan to make the trip to Lincoln soon to watch her compete.

"My parents, they're like really excited," Grushecky said. "They're actually going to come out to a meet in November and watch me swim, so that will be really cool."

Assistant coach Doug Humphrey said Grushecky's situation is unique, considering not as many swimmers come out of the YMCA league and into college programs because it's not as competitive as other leagues.

Grushecky lucked out, Humphrey said, with a good coach and a program to support her and help her develop her talents.

And those talents were enough to get her noticed by Nebraska.

A specialist in the 100- and 200-meter butterfly, Grushecky's best

time in high school was during her sophomore year when she notched a 55.45, something for which she thanks Laurel Highland, her YMCA coach.

"She's probably the reason I got so good at swimming," Grushecky said. "I didn't join her team until eighth grade. Up until then I was OK at swimming, but she started working with me, and I got faster, and that's what made me decide swimming was what I wanted to do."

With the confidence to look into college programs thanks to her faster and faster times, Grushecky filled out a questionnaire for Nebraska in the off chance she might get a bite.

While Humphrey said Grushecky had been on Nebraska's recruiting radar because of her speed, it was her personality that convinced him and head coach Pablo Morales that she was right for the Huskers' program.

"When I talk to people, I look for a desire to get better," Humphrey said. "One of the foundations of our team isn't grabbing the best swimmer we can, it's finding the person who wants to and has the desire to improve. She was a very decorated and talented swimmer, and she still had that desire

to get that much better. That's exactly what we look for."

Now Grushecky is in the midst of earning a top spot in her fly events. In the Huskers' opening meet she won the 100-yard butterfly in a time of 57.55, but with 11 new faces on the team, Nebraska has a lot of talent to choose from.

"A sport like swimming, it's not like football or baseball, where every year that experience helps you," Humphrey said. "You look for your freshman to make an impact. Everyone has an opportunity to be great for the team right away. There's not that waiting period or that development period."

With her comedic personality taking the pressure off of the hard work, Grushecky takes the edge off that competitive spirit and makes some of the hardest workouts doable for her teammates, Humphrey said.

And, while she can only describe the feeling she got in her first dual meet as "cool," Humphrey knows she's ready to take on the challenges of the Big 12 Conference and NCAA championship meets.

"She was just overwhelmed,"

Humphrey said. "She'd just never seen anything of that magnitude. For her, the excitement, the overall electricity was new, and I told her it's only going to get bigger from here."

JUNIOR JOLT

Juniors Jenny Toler and Courtney Jolly each won two events to lead the Nebraska swimming and diving team to a fifth-consecutive season-opening victory, and 10 opener in the last 13 seasons. The Huskers defeated Illinois 172-126 in mid-October at the Devaney Natatorium.

Toler won the 200 freestyle (1:54.46) and the 100 freestyle (:52.91), while Jolly won both the 1-meter (257.02) and 3-meter (284.41) diving events.

Nebraska's other individual winners were senior Lynn Siemert, 50 freestyle (:24.31); freshman Julie Giehl, 500 freestyle (5:05.38); and freshman Kelsey Grushecky, 100 butterfly (:57.55).

The Huskers' 200 medley relay (1:48.54) and 400 freestyle relay (3:32.55) also won.

Siemert, junior Jenna Stroud and freshman Jess Andrews finished 1-2-3 in the 50 freestyle. Toler, Stroud and Siemert were 1-2-3 in the 100 freestyle. The last three also swam on the relays, with Andrews the lead-off in the 200 medley and freshman Meredith Matthies the anchor in the 400 freestyle. ■



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Ready to Compete

Big 12 coaches picked Connie Yori's Husker women's basketball team to finish seventh in the conference, in a poll released prior to Media Days in Kansas City. Texas A&M was first, with seven first-place votes. Oklahoma was second, receiving the other five first-place votes.

Even though the Aggies and Sooners are clear-cut favorites, "I think there's going to be great battles in our league night in and night out," Yori told reporters in Kansas City.

"We think that we can compete."

The Huskers will do so despite having only one returning starter, first-team all-conference forward Kelsey Griffin, and one senior, forward Danielle Page.

Griffin was selected to the coaches' preseason All-Big 12 team, along with preseason player of the year Courtney Paris of Oklahoma, Jackie McFarland of Colorado and Takia Starks and A'Quonesia Franklin of Texas A&M. Dominic Seals of Texas Tech was the preseason newcomer of the year while Tyra White of Texas A&M was the preseason freshman of the year.

Paris, a 6-foot-4 junior from Piedmont, Calif., was the 2007 National Player of the Year.

Griffin averaged 15 points and 8.3 rebounds as a sophomore. Page averaged 7.0 points and 5.5 rebounds, second-best on the team. She also blocked a team-high 60 shots.

Nebraska used the same starting lineup all of last season, finishing 22-10 and advancing to the NCAA Tournament. The postseason appearance was the Huskers' fourth in a row.

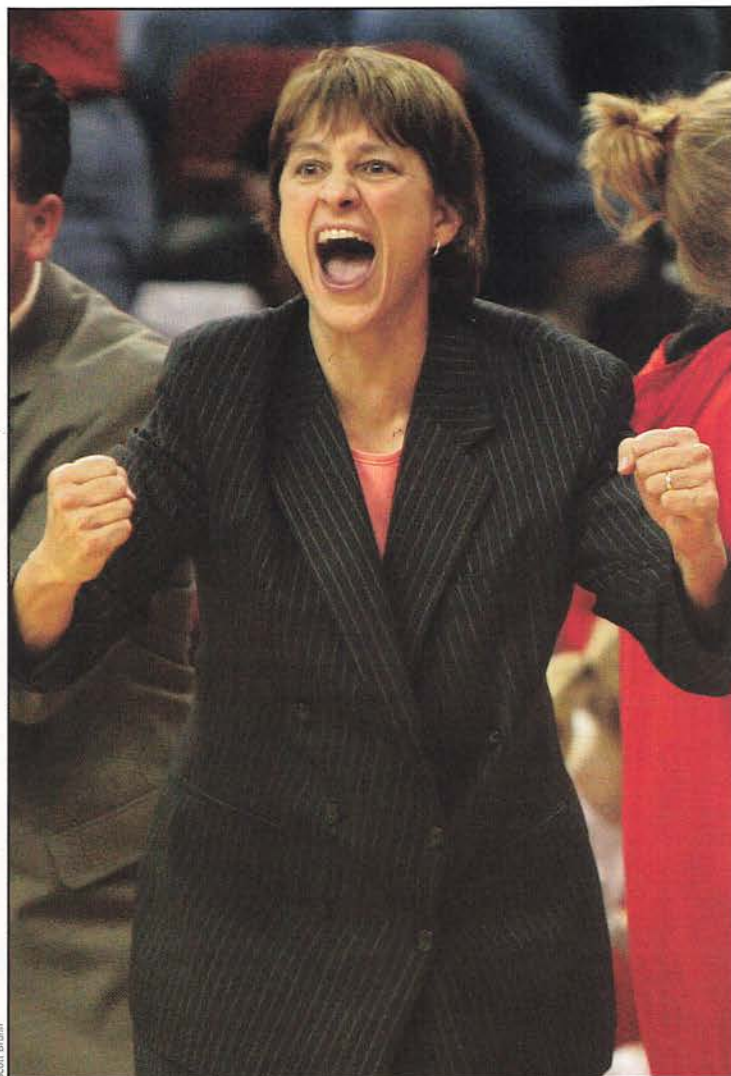
"I think we're really different," Yori said. "We're very different than what we've been. Different doesn't mean better, necessarily. Different doesn't mean worse. We're just different."

"I really like our team. I like our character. I like our work habits. I like our intensity. I like our chemistry. The only thing we're lacking, which is pretty obvious, is . . . experience."

At the same time, the Huskers are talented and they work hard, said Yori, who is in her sixth season. "They always say there's no substitute for experience, but we're going to have to find a substitute. We're going to have to work harder than other



Kelsey Griffin



Connie Yori is entering her sixth season at Nebraska.

2007-08 Roster

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.
Nikki Bober	C	6-4	So.
Kaitlyn Burke	G	5-7	Fr.
Kelsey Griffin	F	6-2	Jr.
Tay Hester	G	5-10	Jr.
Dominique Kelley	G	5-7	Fr.
Kala Kuhlmann	G	5-8	So.
Cory Montgomery	F	6-2	So.
Nicole Neals	G	5-6	So.
Danielle Page	F	6-2	Sr.
Jessica Periago	C	6-4	Fr.
Catheryn Redmon	C	6-3	Fr.
Yvonne Turner	G	5-8	So.
Monique Whittaker	G	5-10	Fr.

teams. We're going to have to have chemistry."

Actually, her team does have some players with experience. "They just haven't been in the starting lineup," she said. "We were in a cycle in our program where we had a big freshman class and a big sophomore class. Our freshmen got experience last year, but not from a starting position."

The roster includes five sophomores and five freshmen.

Nebraska was among six Big 12 teams to advance to the NCAA Tournament last season, and two others played in the post-season WNIT. "This is the top league in terms of coaching in the nation for women's basketball," Yori said. "Every year is tough. It's incredible."

"It's not getting any easier with the additions that we've had this year. I think more and more programs are committed to our great sport. Therefore, there's extraordinary balance. I don't think there's any league in the country who can put forth the depth of great teams that we can."

SCHEDULE

Nov. 1 — Nebraska-Kearney (exhibition); **5** — Nebraska-Omaha (exhibition); **9** — UTEP; **11** — Mississippi; **17** — Florida; **23** — Marist at Honolulu, Oahu Classic; **24** — Utah at Honolulu, Oahu Classic; **25** — Akron at Honolulu, Oahu Classic; **30** — Creighton.

Dec. 2 — Robert Morris; **8** — USC; **13** — at Cal State Bakersfield; **15** — at Long Beach State; **22** — at Ohio State; **30** — Denver.

Jan. 2 — Arkansas-Pine Bluff; **9** — Texas; **12** — Kansas; **16** — at Oklahoma; **19** — at Iowa State; **23** — Texas A&M; **26** — at Baylor; **30** — Kansas State.

Feb. 3 — at Missouri; **6** — at Colorado; **10** — Oklahoma State; **17** — at Kansas; **21** — Missouri; **24** — at Texas Tech; **27** — at Kansas State.

March 2 — Colorado; **5** — Iowa State; **11-15** — at Big 12 Tournament, Kansas City; **22-25** — NCAA first & second rounds, campus sites; **29** — NCAA regionals.

April 1 — NCAA regionals; **6-8** — NCAA Final Four at Tampa, Fla.

At least three of the women's games will be televised nationally, two by Fox Sports Net and one by ESPN2. The Fox Sports Net games, part of the Big 12 package with the network, against Kansas at the Devaney Sports Center on Jan. 12 and against Missouri at Columbia on Feb. 3.

The Missouri game was originally scheduled for Feb. 2 but was moved to accommodate television.

The Huskers' game against Oklahoma State at the Devaney Sports Center on Feb. 10 will be telecast nationally as part of the ESPN2 "February Frenzy."

THE GOOD THING IS

At Big 12 Media Days, men's coach Doc Sadler talked about having eight newcomers on his second Nebraska team. "The good news about having eight new players is they haven't been messed up yet," he said. "They don't understand that I'm trying to mess them up. So that's a plus."

RARE OPPORTUNITY

Sadler's team will be built around senior Aleks Maric, a preseason all-conference selection. "When you have a chance to coach someone like this, you better enjoy it because you won't get that opportunity very many times in your coaching career," said Sadler.

"He's not just a great basketball player, but as hard a worker as we've got in our program. He's put in a tremendous amount of time this summer to be the best that he can be. When your best player is a guy that is your hardest worker, then I think you have a chance to have some success."

Quick Hits

GOT A TICKET?

The Husker volleyball team played in front of consecutive sellout No. 100 at the NU Coliseum in a match against Kansas on Oct. 20. The streak is a continuing NCAA record, of course.

The Huskers were to play Hawaii the next night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center and by mid-week, 13,136 tickets had been sold, meaning the largest crowd ever to watch a regular-season volleyball match would be on-hand to cheer coach John Cook's team.

DOUBLE-DOUBLE

Senior outside hitter Christina Houghtelling recorded her third consecutive double-double in Nebraska's 30-25, 30-21, 30-25 sweep of then No. 25-ranked Oklahoma at Norman. Houghtelling was credited with 14 kills on a season-best .609 hitting percentage and 19 digs. The .609 hitting percentage was Houghtelling's highest since she hit .615 against Florida in the 2005 NCAA Regional in Omaha.



Christina Houghtelling

CROSS COUNTRY

The No. 29-ranked Husker women's cross country team finished 13th out of 38 teams at the NCAA Pre-Nationals in Terre Haute, Ind., in mid-October. Freshman Lara Crofford led the Huskers, finishing 18th in the 6K Blue Race, with a time of 20:46. Crofford was the second-highest finishing freshman.

The Huskers had not competed as a ranked team since 2003. And they hadn't competed in the NCAA Pre-Nationals since 2004, when they finished 28th in the team standings, with only one runner in the top 100. Crofford was among four Huskers who cracked the top 100 this year.

Stanford won the women's competition, followed by Florida State and Michigan State.

The Nebraska men's team finished 33rd, with senior co-captain Peter van der Westhuizen leading the way. He finished 82nd in the 8K Blue Race, with a time of 24:25.

Northern Arizona won the men's competition, followed by Iowa and California.

In addition, Nebraska sent a handful of runners to the Chile Pepper Festival in Fayetteville, Ark., on the same day. Neither the women's nor men's team had enough runners to qualify in the standings.

Elizabeth Marsh finished No. 221 (25:06) among the women, while Mikel Thomas (85. 32:30), Eric Thies (117. 33:10), Alec Maduza (154. 33:52) and Brad Doering (222. 36:24) represented the men.

NCAA PRE-NATIONALS: Husker women finishers — 18. Crofford, 20:46; 63. Natalja Zarcenko, 21:22; 82. Ari Goldstein, 21:31; 95. Joslyn Dalton, 21:39; 102. Rachel Carrizales, 21:45; 130. Jennifer Pancoast, 22:05; 159. Jennifer Webers, 22:23; **Husker men finishers** — 82. Van der Westhuizen, 24:25; 168. Kyle Custer, 25:11; 188. Todd Gulizia, 25:25; 199. Vince Sickler, 25:32; 218. Peter Falcon, 25:54; 229. Matt Conahan, 26:16; 248. Bryce Somer, 27:00.

OFFENSIVE EXPLOSION

The Husker soccer team took 44 shots on goal — count 'em — on the way to a 4-0 victory against Lamar University at Beaumont, Texas, in mid-October. The 44 shots were the most in a match since Nebraska recorded 44 shots in an 11-0 victory against Drury on Sept. 3, 2000.

The Huskers recorded 26 of the shots in the first half, the most in a half since they fired 22 in a 7-0 victory against Belmont on Sept. 6, 2002. Lamar, in marked contrast, managed only three shots.

Sophomore defender Carly Peetz initiated the scoring with a goal in the ninth minute off a pass from Sari Raber. Freshmen scored the other goals, the first of their careers: midfielder Anna White, forward Jaclyn White and forward Michaela Fulmer, who also assisted on White's goal.

Selenia Iacchelli and Alexa Cardona assisted on goals as well.



J.B. Phillips

DRADDY SEMIFINALIST

J.B. Phillips, a senior H-back/tight end, was selected as a semifinalist for the 2007 Draddy Trophy, presented by The National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame.

The award takes into account academic success and community leadership as well as football performance. Schools nominate one candidate, who must be a senior or graduate student in the final season of eligibility and have a cumulative grade-point average of 3.2 or better on a 4.0 scale.

Phillips has earned a degree in marketing and is on schedule to complete a master's degree in May of 2008. He has a 3.917 GPA in his post-graduate studies.

The Draddy Trophy comes with a \$25,000 post-graduate scholarship. As many as 15 finalists are slated to be announced on Oct. 25, with each receiving an \$18,000 scholarship.

The award will be presented at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City on Dec. 4. Former Cornhuskers Rob Zatechka (1994) and Kyle Vanden Bosch (2000) have won the award and have been among 20 former Cornhuskers to be NFF scholar-athletes. ■

CROSSWORD

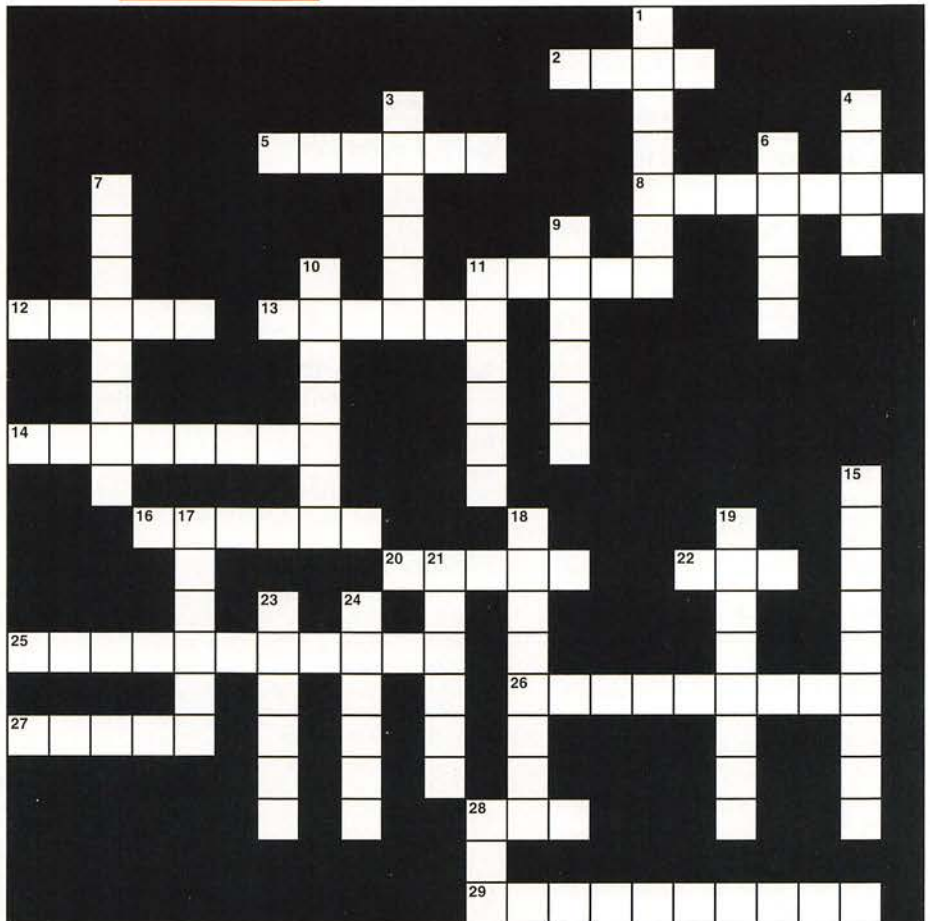
ACROSS

- 2 Frank Solich's current school
- 5 Offensive captain
- 8 Athletic director
- 11 2002 All-America kick returner
- 12 1997 All-America defensive tackle
- 13 Wears No. 99
- 14 Phillip Dillard's home state
- 16 Scored touchdown vs. Oklahoma State
- 20 Terre Green's hometown
- 22 Defensive lineman from Oregon
- 25 Bill Callahan's college position
- 26 Texas nickname
- 27 Texas head coach
- 28 Sam Keller's former school
- 29 Marlon Lucky's home state

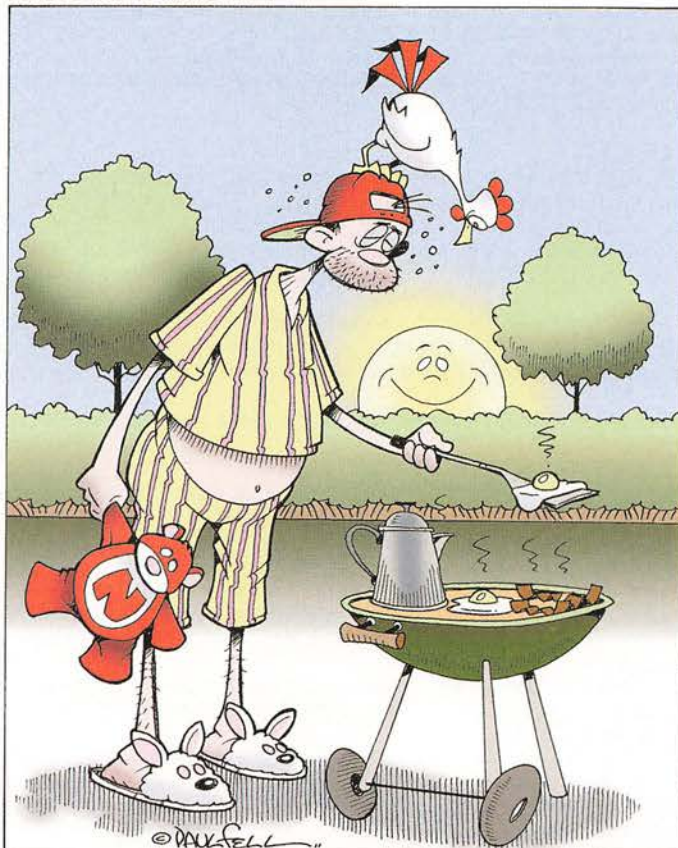
DOWN

- 1 Wide receivers coach
- 3 Wears No. 1
- 4 Backup quarterback
- 6 Wore retired No. 60
- 7 Leading rusher vs. Oklahoma State
- 9 Wears No. 98
- 10 Turner Gill's current school
- 11 Wears No. 2
- 15 Cornerbacks coach
- 17 Texas campus location
- 18 Scored touchdown vs. Oklahoma State
- 19 2003 All-America defensive back
- 21 Leading tackler vs. Oklahoma State
- 23 Texas school color
- 24 Nov. 3 opponent
- 28 Network for NU-Texas telecast

Answers in Nov. 3 issue



HUSKERNUTZ



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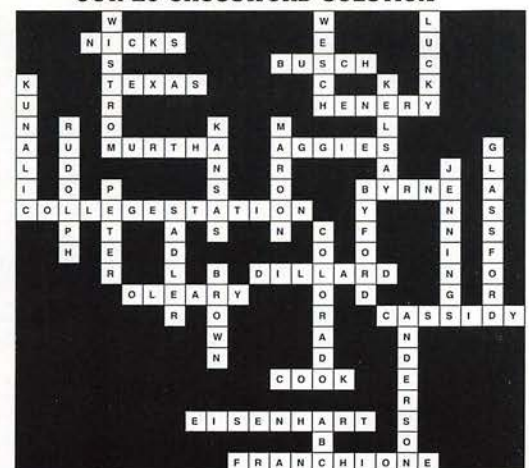
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OCT. 20 CROSSWORD SOLUTION



10 YEARS AGO ...

Huskers Illustrated looks back at some of the top stories of 1997

**Nov. 8, 1997:
Volume 17, No. 15**

AN ALLIANCE DIVIDED

Nebraska or Penn State? What about Florida State or Michigan? Under the current bowl system, some team is probably going to be left in the cold despite doing all it can on the field.

SCARED STRAIGHT

Haunted by losses to Texas A&M and Texas, the soccer team has righted itself in time to make a push for the postseason.

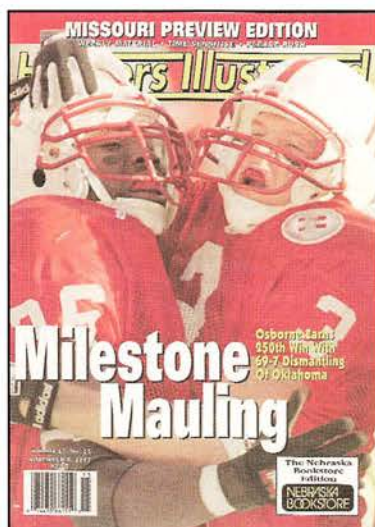
BACK FROM THE DEAD

Vertigo nearly ended his football career. Two years later, Tony Ortiz again is beginning to show people why he was considered the best linebacker in the country.

HUSKERS END SOONER SERIES WITH 69-7 WIN

That Tom Osborne's 250th coaching victory would come against Oklahoma was fitting. The Sooners were almost his undoing early on. His first five Oklahoma games as head coach were losses, and because of those losses, he seriously considered leaving Nebraska for Colorado in 1978.

After eight seasons, his record against the Sooners was 1-8, with the extra game coming in a 1979 Orange Bowl rematch



that took some of the luster off his first victory against them.

"I hadn't thought about that," Osborne said in response to a question during his Tuesday news conference the week of the Oklahoma game. "But I guess it is a little bit ironic."

"I'm not a big one on sentiment. I'm not really big on looking back in the past. I guess I'm so busy right now just trying to figure out what to do Saturday, I don't have time to reflect on it."

That attitude has served Osborne well in a quarter of a century as the Cornhuskers' coach. He has never tarried or taken time to ponder his accomplishments. "Maybe there will come a day when I'll sit back and think about all the times that were," he said. "But right now, I don't think about it very much."

If the day ever does come when he's willing to sit back and think about all the times that were, Osborne can remember that his 250th victory was decisive and that it evened the score against an old foe, which won't appear again on Nebraska's regular-season schedule until the year 2000.

Osborne's record against Oklahoma stands at 13-13 after a 69-7 victory that left those in a Memorial Stadium crowd of 75,926 wondering how the once-mighty Sooners had fallen.

The victory was his seventh in a row and ninth out of 10 against Oklahoma. It also was the most lopsided in the series — last season, the Cornhuskers won at Norman 73-21.

In characteristic fashion, however, Osborne did his best to credit Oklahoma's effort, no small task. "I think after a few bad things happened, they maybe lost heart a little bit," he said.

A few bad things? Maybe lost heart a little bit? Osborne was understating . . . ■

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**Mike
BABCOCK**

FRUSTRATING, YES. Nightmare, no. At least not yet.

"It's not anything real fun," defensive end Zach Potter said following Nebraska's third consecutive loss, 36-14 against Texas A&M. "But I wouldn't consider it a nightmare."

Four games remain, and "we're still playing for pride," he said.

The Cornhuskers don't lack motivation. "We've got to go out and face all you guys (reporters) every week," said Potter. And they have to "go to class and face our schoolmates."

"You hear people talk. So, I mean, we're playing for a lot still."

Three of the four games are on the road. And Nebraska needs to win at least two to be bowl eligible. "Just because we're 4-4, that doesn't mean our season's over; that's for sure," he said.

Potter was the first of four players who answered questions at the podium set up for that purpose in the weight room. A handful of other players were interviewed in the lounge nearby.

Potter was probably the most upbeat of the four.

"We have to stick together," he said. "We just have to keep going."

"I really don't want to end up being 4-8."

Nebraska hasn't lost as many as eight games since 1957, Bill Jennings' first season as coach. Sure, it played only 10 back then, losing nine. But the expectations were much different, too.

The Cornhuskers were expected to continue to move forward, after winning the Big 12 North Division title last season and playing in the Cotton Bowl game.

The division was supposed to be there for the taking this season, and if they could get to the conference championship game in San Antonio . . . well, a BCS bowl wasn't out of the question.

Now, just about any bowl game would look pretty good. And a bid probably could be had with a .500 record. Probably, because Kansas was 6-6 last season and wasn't invited to a bowl.

The Jayhawks are leading the North Division, by the way. Right now, Nebraska's winning two more might be a stretch. So the point could be moot.

Quarterback Sam Keller was asked about bowl eligibility.

"The thing about it is, we can't put pressure on ourselves," he said. "We just have to go out and work every week, take it one game at a time because we know we have the ability and the confidence in each other to go out and attack every week and try to put a win on the board."

"So we can't look ahead too far."

Next up is Texas in Austin. That's far enough.

"We've got a heck of a challenge," said Keller.

Every week, Keller shows up for postgame interviews. And every week, he takes responsibility for the shortcomings of the offense. "It's really, really tough, extremely tough," he said.

"We're just trying so hard to win and make something happen."

This would be the week when things finally came together, he thought. And during the first half, it appeared they had. They overcame adversity of their own creation. They responded to a pair of Texas A&M touchdowns with two touchdowns of their own and trailed by only two points at halftime.

But they were held scoreless in the second half.

"I won't say we're losing guys," said sophomore safety Larry Asante. "I say there are some people down in the locker room. As leaders, we've got to bring 'em along, pick 'em up, encourage them."

"We can't look at it as a problem. We've got to look at it as an opportunity."

Senior tight end Sean Hill was among those who remained optimistic.

"Everyone is positive in there. I mean, what else can you say?" he said. "It's not wearing on us. You can't give up. This is where teams will split. But we're not going to let it. We're still tight and still positive in the waning seconds of the game. We're going to keep positive and keep plugging away."

That becomes more difficult as the losses mount, however.

"It's tougher than you think, but we can do it,"

Keller said. "We're going to do it. There's no other way to go. You just have to keep fighting and keep trying. Never, ever, ever quit."

"We don't have quitters here. Things have not been going our way at all for three weeks now, and you can't just quit because it keeps happening. You just have to keep fighting."

Nebraska fans were infused with energy early in the week when Tom Osborne was named interim athletic director, replacing Steve Pederson, who was asked to resign on Monday.

The energy was apparent at Memorial Stadium and seemed to affect the players during the first half, in particular. Potter couldn't explain what had happened.

"I don't really know all the answers to come up here and say, 'We're doing this wrong or doing that wrong.' Things are just going wrong, and it's hard to fix them," he said.

"I don't know what to say."

No one else did, either. ■



**Defensive end Zach
Potter says the Huskers
are "playing for pride."**

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for nearly 30 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

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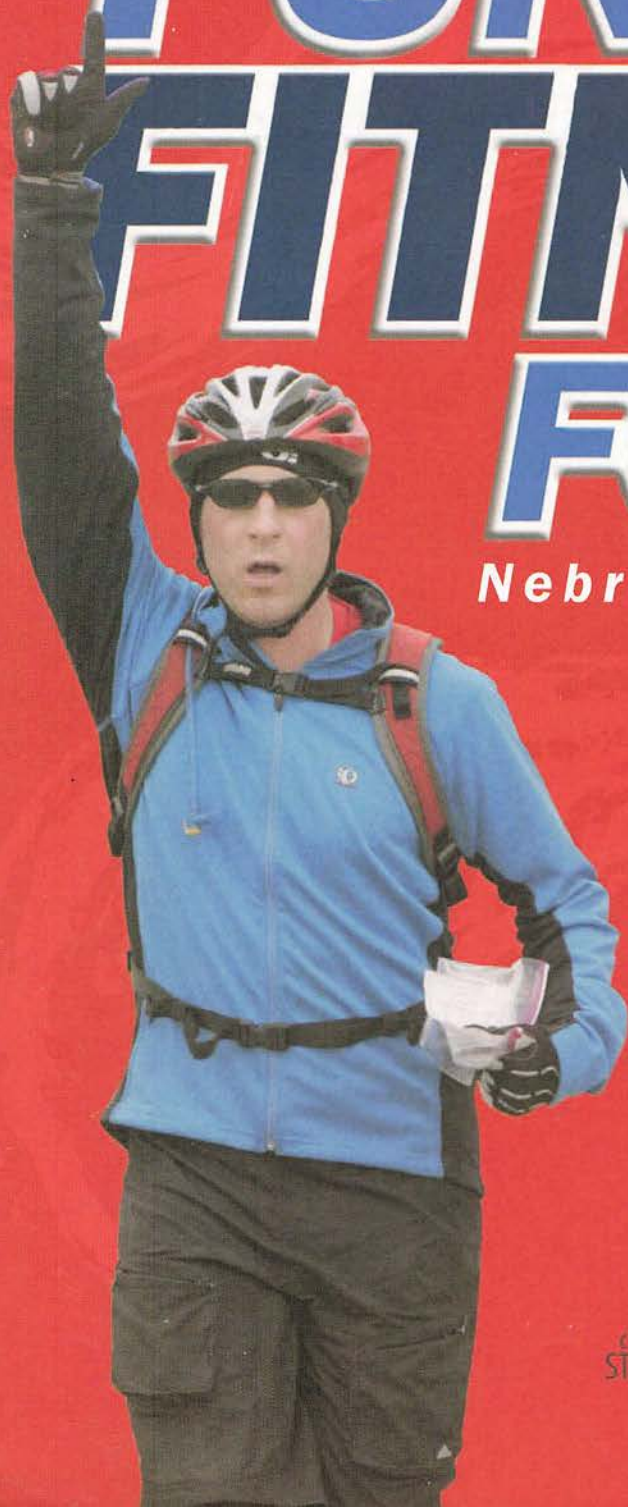
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